ONE ACT PLAYS

SELECTED BY
JAMES PLAISTED WEBBER
AND HANSON HART WEBBER

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ONE-ACT PLAYS

SELECTED AND EDITED BY

JAMES PLAISTED WEBBER

AND

HANSON HART WEBSTER

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

The Riverside Press Cambridge

1923

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AND HANSON HART WEBSTER

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The Riverside Press

CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

FOREWORD

In this book we have tried to accomplish several aims: first, to assemble one-act plays which have not been printed in other anthologies for schools, and which at the same time are well suited to young people's reading; second, to suggest to teachers a number of ways of using these plays in the classroom and to give a few hints about staging them; third, to point out available sources of plots for students' use in the writing of one-act plays; and, finally, to explain briefly the fundamentals of dramatic expression.

Only one of the plays here reprinted has up to this time appeared in any book prepared for a purpose similar to ours. We thus present a considerable body of fresh material; and it is indisputably the unhackneyed that our audience demands. Nearly all of these plays are by contemporary writers. We include, however, two examples of the one-act play as written by dramatists of a slightly earlier school, inasmuch as each is well worth the time and thought of young people.

We have maintained high dramatic and literary standards; and, even more important, we have admitted to these pages only plays which are wholesome, intelligible, and interesting. Each play has been recommended by some competent instructor in dramatic literature; and, so far as we can judge from experience and observation, each possesses an unusually strong appeal to boys and girls of high-school age. We believe that teachers will need little prompting as to how to correlate most of these plays with various subjects in the curriculum. Brighouse's *Followers*, for example, may well inspire students to write plays upon episodes in *Cranford* or some other favorite book; Price's *The Coming of Fair Annie* will suggest the use of other ballads in a similar way; five of our plays will be found to correlate with the study of history; *Nevertheless* lends itself admirably to Better Speech programs; and so on.

We hope that with due modesty we may claim that the suggestions offered throughout the book are sufficiently specific and

practical to be of real help to both teachers and students. Mr. Webber desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to F. F. Mackay, Esq., from whose lectures at the National Conservatory of Dramatic Art and from whose book, *The Art of Acting*, most of the phraseology in the section entitled "The Technique of Vocal Expression" is drawn; to M. Gustave Rolland, stage-manager of the company playing at the Shubert Theater in New York City during the summer of 1918, for the opportunity of studying for several weeks the conduct of an elaborate production; to Stuart Walker, Esq., for experience gained at the Murat Theater, Indianapolis, during the summer seasons when he has played under his direction and that of Mr. Melville Burke; and to Frank William Cushwa, Professor of English at the Phillips Exeter Academy, for many helpful criticisms and suggestions.

We wish also to make grateful acknowledgment of the courtesies shown us by the authors and publishers represented in this book, and to many teachers offering the results of their experience, particularly Miss Alice E. Craig, High School, Los Angeles, California; Professor Robert E. Rogers, Cambridge; and Miss Alice H. Spaulding, High School, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Authors and publishers have permitted the reprinting of copyrighted material with the stipulation that these plays are to be used only in classroom work. No other use is authorized except under special arrangement. If, therefore, any public performance is contemplated, it will be necessary in every case except that of Tennyson's *The Falcon* to secure in advance written permission from the holders of the acting rights, whose names and addresses are printed in footnotes on the first page of each play.

J. P. W.
H. H. W.

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THE STUDY OF THE ONE-ACT PLAY

THERE are three reasons why the study of the one-act play is being introduced into high and preparatory schools. In the first place, the one-act play may be read as literature. In this case, it claims the same consideration as a work of art as does the short story. For while it is not to be expected that the writers of one-act plays will produce any masterpiece comparable to the glories of the Elizabethan stage, or rivaling the comedies of Sheridan and Goldsmith, they are, nevertheless, creating works, which, in their own field, are not incomparable to the short stories of Poe, Maupassant, and Kipling. And over the longer drama, the one-act play has this advantage: it can be read easily at a single sitting; or in a single classroom period.

Again, the one-act play may be used in conjunction with the study of English composition. *The Cottage on the Moor*, by boys of the Perse School, Cambridge, England, and *Solemn Pride*, by an American schoolboy, both included in this volume, show that the accomplishment of pupils of the high-school age in writing plays is on quite as high a plane as are their attempts at writing short stories; and that their attempts at such creations need no more be deferred until college days in the one case than in the other.

Finally, the one-act play offers special advantages over the longer play for the development of dramatic talent. In the first place, the number of lines which the pupil should know familiarly, or commit to memory in case the plays are actually performed, is generally appreciably less than in the longer play. And, in the second place, the characters as a rule are far less complex; generally show little if any change or development; and therefore call for less subtlety in their delineation.

I. THE ONE-ACT PLAY AS LITERATURE

JUST how one should conduct a course in the study of the one-act play must, like all such questions, be left largely to the individual teacher. But the following suggestions may serve at least for a point of departure.

At the outset, a discussion of what constitutes *the dramatic* will be in order. A review of various dicta, from the days of Aristotle to Brander Matthews, may show that the term is as difficult of

final definition as "beauty," "poetry," and "art." Yet, by considering various plays and "rubbing them together," we may cause what is *dramatic* like Plato's *justice*, to flash out from the contact, like fire from dry bits of wood.

Undoubtedly the pupil will already be acquainted with some longer plays; for instance, the more popular of Shakespeare's. Through a comparison of the one-act play with such dramas he will discover some of the distinctive features of the one-act play as a type.

"The few who have written about it," says Margaret Gardner Mayorga in the Introduction to her *Representative One-Act Plays by American Authors*, "are agreed that the one-act play is properly analogous to the short story, that it is quite as rigid a form, and that it is as different a type from the longer play as the short story is from the novel. It cannot, if it is a good one-act play, be either expanded into three acts or condensed from the longer play without a loss. Because of this integrity, the one-act play is an art form, tending toward a perfect whole."

"Its plot," states Helen Louise Cohen in her collection, *One-Act Plays by Modern Authors*, "must from beginning to end be dominated by a single theme; its crises may be a series of crises of character as well as conflicts of will or physical conflicts; it must by a method of foreshadowing sustain the interest of the audience unflaggingly, but ultimately relieve their tension; it must achieve swift characterization by means of pantomime and dialogue; and its dialogue must achieve its effects by the same methods as the dialogues of longer plays, but by even greater economy of means. But when all is said and done, the success of a one-act play is judged, not by its conformity to any set of hard-and-fast rules, but by its powers to interest, enlighten, and hold an audience."

After the preliminary discussion of what constitutes drama, and a rapid reading of a particular play to note how it differs from longer dramas, and to see whether it is primarily a play of episode, of character, or of fantasy, nearly any study which will call for a careful examination of the text will prove fruitful; all that is necessary is that the object in view be definite and reasonable. One of the best methods is to perform the task which Mr. William T. Price used to set for students of the longer drama; namely, to divide the play into "scenes" in the sense in which that word is used in the French drama; that is, into sections corresponding to the change in the number of personages on the stage at any given moment; and then, discovering just what is accomplished, either in exposition by what they say, or in action by what they do, to

state it succinctly in a single sentence. In a play like *Manikin and Minikin*, where no change takes place in the number of personages on the stage, the task may consist in dividing the dialogue into the most logical sections one can find, and in summing these up in sentences or in giving each section its appropriate title.

II. The One-Act Play in Connection with English Composition

Such an analysis of plays as we have suggested above has been often considered the only basis for effective attempts at playwriting. But after the pupil has gained some knowledge and appreciation of the one-act play as a type, and has analyzed the "scenes" as just suggested, how may the teacher set the pupil actually to work at dramatic compositions of his own? Well, one of the first steps, which any pupil may attempt with a fair degree of success, is in the nature of description. Let him write, for several plays, some detailed "settings" such as that of *My Lady's Lace*.

"Scene: The garden of a small Dutch house of about 1660. The house, with a door leading into it, and a double window with red shutters, occupies two thirds of the background, extending off to the right — where there is evidently a garden. This garden, on the right side, is railed in by a low wooden fence, over which hang lilac bushes. The other third of the background [to the left] is occupied by a stone wall about seven feet high, with a door in it that leads into a street. When the door is open, a canal way is seen through it with houses on the side opposite. A bench stands under the window by the house, and just under the lilac bush to the right, a square rustic table with a chair above it, and a stool in front of it. Close by the table there is also the traditional lacemaker's pillow on its little wooden stand. The pillow is covered with many bobbins. A blue satin box containing various pieces of lace stands on the table."

Here is the opportunity for work which will be very definite, concrete, orderly. In connection with this work, even those pupils who have shown no ability with pencil should be encouraged to draw diagrams, paint pictures, or fashion miniature models of their sets. One never knows what may "flash forth."

The second step may be the arrangement (in dramatic form) of a dialogue already made to hand. Let the pupil take, for example, the account of Saul's visit to the Witch of Endor from the twenty-eighth chapter of the First Book of Samuel. There he will find a complete scene, with "a beginning, a middle, and an end." He will also easily perceive what parts of that story should be written as stage directions; and he should be encouraged to

elaborate the material actually presented by the chapter. Similar exercises may be based upon Browning's *An Incident of the French Camp*, and upon various novels, such as *Kidnapped*, and *Treasure Island*, already utilized, of course, by Jules Eckert Goodman. None of these exercises, to be sure, are as yet anything like one-act plays, but they offer practice for the completed piece which the pupil is preparing to attempt.

The third step will be in the nature of narration. Let the pupil write a scenario; by this we mean a plot in story form. This plot may be derived from some story which the pupil has read; it may be a dramatization of some incident in real life; or it may be original so far as any plot may be original. "Gozzi," said Goethe, "maintained that there can be but thirty-six tragic situations" (and with Goethe the term "tragic" is said to be synonymous with "dramatic"). "Schiller took great pains to find more, but he was unable to find even so many as Gozzi." [1]

And what next? Well, the next step is "to our work alive"; to attempt actually to write the original one-act play. Indeed, some students will hardly need to take all the preliminary steps before they make their first effort. In most cases, however, "Natura [including human nature] nihil fecit per saltum."

III. The One-Act Play as a Means for developing Dramatic Talent

The defense of the value of acting, or at least the dramatic interpretation of literature, as a factor in education was made long ago. Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School, wrote in 1881: "Now if 'acting,' or, better still, 'acted readings,' were universal, there you have a power for good incalculable. Good acting is the most literary thing in the world, the most living distiller of new thought and bright brain power possible." More recently, in the introduction to the Play Books of the Perse School, Cambridge, England, its Headmaster, Dr. W. H. D. Rouse, states: "Acting is one of the most potent means of learning. Thought, word, and act linked together make an impression such as nothing else can make. In this direction lies the salvation of our schools." While Arthur C. Benson, in *The School Master*, though he is thinking apparently more of the teacher's method of conducting any class, writes: "A school lesson should be of the nature of a dramatic performance, from which some interest and

[1] *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations.* By Georges Polti. Translated by Lucile Ray. Published by James Knapp Reeve, Franklin, Ohio, 1921.

amusement may be expected; while at the same time there must be solid and business-like work done."

But admitting the truth of these statements, one may ask: Can the teacher who has had no special training conduct work in dramatic expression successfully? Well, it is hardly to be expected that such a one can do it as well as the trained specialist, but his every attempt in this direction will bring gratifying results. Therefore, let no fears of inexperience deter him.

For such inexperienced teacher what should be the method of procedure? Well, first of all, he should read what is said in this volume concerning stage deportment, business, acting, and the duties of the various participants in a play. Then, having selected one of the shorter and simpler plays, let him study it himself in the light of the information gained. Next, supposing that the piece is to be used simply in classroom and for, say, only three class periods, let him draw up before he comes to class his cast of characters and his staff. But before he announces these choices, in order neither to diminish the interest on the part of those pupils omitted from staff and cast, nor to divert that of those chosen, from everything except that which concerns their particular assignments, let him read aloud or have the play read aloud by his pupils, and then discuss the portrayal of the characters and the action. At this point arises the question of how far he should allow his pupils free initiative. The answer of many theorists to this question would be that the pupils should be encouraged to discuss the play freely and to develop the interpretation in their own way. Well, the reply to the theorists is that, while free discussion is desirable, and that deviations from the teacher's conception and interpretation, if shown to be based on fact, should certainly not be suppressed, yet the teacher must insist that there is truth in art as well as in life or science; that in the case of dramatic expression the truths to be sought are: first, the author's intention; and, second, the means for revealing it. But, inasmuch as the younger heads have had a slighter knowledge of life and character than their teacher, their analyses will seldom be more truthful than his; and, since most of them are utterly unconscious of how they themselves mirror thought in voice, facial expression, pose, and gesture, their work must at first be largely mimetic. These conditions in the early stages of dramatic expression are not different from those attendant on the first steps in the study of any of the arts. Dr. Haweis, for instance, in *My Musical Memories*, tells how his violin teacher marked every note in his lesson "up bow," "down bow" and so forth. With

much labor he mastered all these details. When he had acquired sufficient skill to follow all the directions, Oury one day surprised him by saying, "Now play it any way you please."

Toward the end of the class period, the teacher, making such changes in his preliminary casting and assignment of staff work as the experience of the hour may have suggested, lays out the work for the next meeting. This should entail on the part of the cast such a thorough familiarization with their lines that they will be able to read without keeping their eyes glued to the page, and perhaps, in the case of the shorter parts, their memorization. Then the members of the staff should be instructed to read over what is said in the later pages of this book regarding their particular duties and to put into practice at the next rehearsal whatever seems practicable under the circumstances. The rest of the class may be assigned various things to do. For instance, according to the nature of the play and the information available, there may be an essay or two concerning the history of the period represented by the play, a sketch of the author's life, a synopsis of the drama, the plot of the play in narrative form, or an essay on some special topic concerning the stage.

At the next period, if time permits, the written work may be first presented. Then comes the rehearsal of the play. This, with limited time at his disposal, the teacher may be able to run through but once; but he and his pupil audience should make notes, and during the last few minutes offer their comments and suggestions.

If the third session must be the last one devoted to a particular play, it should be conducted as much like a public performance as possible. Toward the end of the hour, if the performance is short enough to warrant it, the study of the next play may be commenced with such discussion as time permits; and a new cast and staff may be appointed.

As time goes on, the teacher may delegate his work as director more and more to his pupils. This may include even the conducting of the second rehearsals by the stage managers, who may ultimately be appointed to fulfill all the duties of the director, the teacher becoming a sort of director-general.

So much for general principles and suggestions. For the teacher who desires to conduct plays as plays, either in the classroom or in public, it has seemed advisable to offer in the sections following page 265 more detailed assistance in the fundamentals of dramatic presentation.

ONE-ACT PLAYS

* * *

THE BOY COMES HOME [1]

A Comedy

By A. A. MILNE

CHARACTERS

Uncle James.
Aunt Emily.
Philip.
Mary, *the parlour maid.*
Mrs. Higgins, *the cook.*
Time: *The day after the War.*

Scene: *A room in Uncle James's house in the Cromwell Road. Any room in Uncle James's house is furnished in heavy mid-Victorian style; this particular morning-room is perhaps solider and more respectable even than the others, from the heavy table in the middle of it to the heavy engravings on the walls. There are two doors to it. The one at the back opens into the hall, the one at the side into the dining-room.*

Philip comes in from the hall and goes into the dining-room. Apparently he finds nothing there, for he returns to the morning-room, looks about him for a moment and then rings the bell. It is ten o'clock, and he wants his breakfast. He picks up the paper, and sits in a heavy armchair in front of the fire — a pleasant-looking well-

[1] Reprinted by special arrangement with Mr. Milne. All rights reserved. This play is one of five contained in Milne's *First Plays*, of which the American publisher is Alfred A. Knopf, New York. For permission to produce, address Samuel French, Ltd., 28 West 38th Street, New York, the agent for the acting rights.

built person of twenty-three, with an air of decisiveness about him. Mary, the parlour maid, comes in.

MARY. Did you ring, Master Philip?

PHILIP [*absently*]. Yes; I want some breakfast, please, Mary.

MARY [*coldly*]. Breakfast has been cleared away an hour ago.

PHILIP. Exactly. That's why I rang. You can boil me a couple of eggs or something. And coffee, not tea.

MARY. I'm sure I don't know what Mrs. Higgins will say?

PHILIP [*getting up*]. Who is Mrs. Higgins?

MARY. The cook. And she's not used to being put about like this.

PHILIP. Do you think she'll say something?

MARY. I don't know *what* she'll say.

PHILIP. You need n't tell me, you know, if you don't want to. Anyway, I don't suppose it will shock me. One gets used to it in the Army.

[*He smiles pleasantly at her.*]

MARY. Well, I'll do what I can, sir. But breakfast at eight sharp is the master's rule, just as it used to be before you went away to the war.

PHILIP. Before I went away to the war I did a lot of silly things. Don't drag them up now. [*More curtly.*] Two eggs, and if there 's a ham bring that along too.

[*He turns away.*]

MARY [*doubtfully, as she prepares to go*]. Well, I'm sure I don't know what Mrs. Higgins will say.

[*Exit Mary. As she goes out she makes way for Aunt Emily to come in, a kind-hearted mid-Victorian lady who has never had any desire for the vote.*]

EMILY. *There* you are, Philip! Good-morning, dear. Did you sleep well?

PHILIP. Rather; splendidly, thanks, Aunt Emily. How are you? [*He kisses her.*]

EMILY. And did you have a good breakfast? Naughty boy to be late for it. I always thought they had to get up so early in the Army.

PHILIP. They do. That's why they're so late when they get out of the Army.

EMILY. Dear me! I should have thought a habit of four years would have stayed with you.

PHILIP. Every morning for four years, as I've shot out of bed, I've said to myself, "Wait! A time will come." [*Smiling.*] That does n't really give a habit a chance.

EMILY. Well, I dare say you wanted your sleep out. I was so afraid that a really cosy bed would keep you awake after all those years in the trenches.

PHILIP. Well, one is n't in the trenches all the time. And one gets leave — if one's an officer.

EMILY [*reproachfully*]. You did n't spend much of it with *us*, Philip.

PHILIP [*taking her hands*]. I know; but you did understand, did n't you, dear?

EMILY. We're not very gay, and I know you must have wanted gaiety for the little time you had. But I think your Uncle James felt it. After all, dear, you've lived with us for some years, and he *is* your guardian.

PHILIP. I know. *You've* been a darling to me always, Aunt Emily. But [*awkwardly*] Uncle James and I —

EMILY. Of course, he is a *little* difficult to get on with. I'm more used to him. But I'm sure he really is very fond of you, Philip.

PHILIP. H'm! I always used to be frightened of him. . . . I suppose he's just the same. He seemed just the same last night — and he still has breakfast at eight o'clock. Been making pots of money, I suppose?

EMILY. He never tells me exactly, but he did speak once about the absurdity of the excess-profits tax. You see, jam is a thing the Army wants.

PHILIP. It certainly gets it.

EMILY. It was so nice for him, because it made him feel he was doing his bit, helping the poor men in the trenches.

Enter Mary

MARY. Mrs. Higgins wishes to speak to you, ma'am.

[*She looks at Philip as much as to say, "There you are!"*]

EMILY [*getting up*]. Yes, I'll come. [*To Philip.*] I think I'd better just see what she wants, Philip.

PHILIP [*firmly to Mary*]. Tell Mrs. Higgins to come here. [*Mary hesitates and looks at her mistress.*] At once, please.

[*Exit Mary.*]

EMILY [*upset*]. Philip, dear, I don't know what Mrs. Higgins will say —

PHILIP. No; nobody seems to. I thought we might really find out for once.

EMILY [*going towards the door*]. Perhaps I'd better go —

PHILIP [*putting his arm around her waist*]. Oh, no, you must n't. You see, she really wants to see *me*.

EMILY. *You?*

PHILIP. Yes; I ordered breakfast five minutes ago.

EMILY. Philip! My poor boy! Why did n't you tell me? and I dare say I could have got it for you. Though I don't know what Mrs. Higgins —

[*An extremely angry voice is heard outside, and Mrs. Higgins, stout and aggressive, comes in.*]

MRS. HIGGINS [*truculently*]. You sent for me, ma'am?

EMILY [*nervously*]. Yes — er — I think if you — perhaps —

PHILIP [*calmly*]. *I* sent for you, Mrs. Higgins. I want some breakfast. Did n't Mary tell you?

MRS. HIGGINS. Breakfast is at eight o'clock. It always has been as long as I've been in this house, and always will be until I get further orders.

PHILIP. Well, you've just got further orders. Two eggs, and if there's a ham —

MRS. HIGGINS. Orders. We're talking about orders. From whom in this house do I take orders, may I ask?

PHILIP. In this case from me.

MRS. HIGGINS [*playing her trump-card*]. In that case, ma'am, I wish to give a month's notice from to-day. *In*clusive.

PHILIP [*quickly, before his aunt can say anything*]. Certainly. In fact, you'd probably prefer it if my aunt gave *you* notice, and then you could go at once. We can easily arrange that. [*To Aunt Emily as he takes out a fountain-pen and cheque book.*] What do you pay her?

EMILY [*faintly*]. Forty-five pounds.

PHILIP [*writing on his knee*]. Twelves into forty-five. . . . [*Pleasantly to Mrs. Higgins, but without looking up.*] I hope you don't mind a Cox's cheque. Some people do; but this is quite a good one. [*Tearing it out.*] Here you are.

MRS. HIGGINS [*taken aback*]. What's this?

PHILIP. Your wages instead of notice. Now you can go at once.

MRS. HIGGINS. Who said anything about going?

PHILIP [*surprised*]. I'm sorry; I thought *you* did.

MRS. HIGGINS. If it's only a bit of breakfast, I don't say but what I might n't get it, if I'm asked decent.

PHILIP [*putting back the cheque*]. Then let me say again, "Two eggs, ham and coffee." And Mary can bring the ham up at once, and I'll get going on that. [*Turning away.*] Thanks very much.

MRS. HIGGINS. Well, I — well — well! [*Exit speechless.*]

PHILIP [*surprised*]. Is that all she ever says? It isn't much to worry about.

EMILY. Philip, how could you! I should have been terrified.

PHILIP. Well, you see, I've done your job for two years out there.

EMILY. What job?

PHILIP. Mess President. . . . I think I'll go and see about that ham.

[*He smiles at her and goes out into the dining-room. Aunt Emily wanders around the room, putting a few things tidy as is her habit, when she is interrupted by the entrance of Uncle James. James is not a big man, nor an impressive one in his black morning-coat; and his thin straggly beard, now going grey, does not hide a chin of any great power; but he has a severity which passes for strength with the weak.*]

JAMES. Philip down yet?

EMILY. He's just having his breakfast.

JAMES [*looking at his watch*]. Ten o'clock. [*Snapping it shut and putting it back.*] Ten o'clock. I say ten o'clock, Emily.

EMILY. Yes, dear, I heard you.

JAMES. You don't say anything?

EMILY [*vaguely*]. I expect he's tired after that long war.

JAMES. That's no excuse for not being punctual. I suppose he learnt punctuality in the Army?

EMILY. I expect he learnt it, James, but I understood him to say that he'd forgotten it.

JAMES. Then the sooner he learns it again the better. I particularly stayed away from the office to-day in order to talk things over with him, and [*looking at his watch*] here's ten o'clock — past ten — and no sign of him. I'm practically throwing away a day.

EMILY. What are you going to talk to him about?

JAMES. His future, naturally. I have decided that the best thing he can do is to come into the business at once.

EMILY. Are you really going to talk it over with him,

James, or are you just going to tell him that he *must* come?

JAMES [*surprised*]. What do you mean? What's the difference? Naturally we shall talk it over first, and — er — naturally he'll fall in with my wishes.

EMILY. I suppose he can hardly help himself, poor boy.

JAMES. Not until he's twenty-five, anyhow. When he's twenty-five he can have his own money and do what he likes with it.

EMILY [*timidly*]. But I think you ought to consult him a little, dear. After all, he *has* been fighting for us.

JAMES [*with his back to the fire*]. Now that's the sort of silly sentiment that there's been much too much of. I object to it strongly. I don't want to boast, but I think I may claim to have done my share. I gave up my nephew to my country, and I — er — suffered from the shortage of potatoes to an extent that you probably did n't realize. Indeed, if it had n't been for your fortunate discovery about that time that you did n't really like potatoes, I don't know how we should have carried on. And, as I think I've told you before, the excess-profits tax seemed to me a singularly stupid piece of legislation — but I paid it. And I don't go boasting about how much I paid.

EMILY [*unconvinced*]. Well, I think that Philip's four years out there have made him more of a man; he does n't seem somehow like a boy who can be told what to do. I'm sure they've taught him something.

JAMES. I've no doubt that they've taught him something about — er — bombs and — er — which end a revolver goes off, and how to form fours. But I don't see that that sort of thing helps him to decide upon the most suitable career for a young man in after-war conditions.

EMILY. Well, I can only say you'll find him different.

JAMES. I did n't notice any particular difference last night.

EMILY. I think you'll find him rather more — I can't quite think of the word, but Mrs. Higgins could tell you what I mean.

JAMES. Of course, if he likes to earn his living any other way, he may; but I don't see how he proposes to do it so long as I hold the purse-strings. [*Looking at his watch.*] Perhaps you'd better tell him that I cannot wait any longer.

[*Emily opens the door leading into the dining-room and talks through it to Philip.*]

EMILY. Philip, your uncle is waiting to see you before he goes to the office. Will you be long, dear?

PHILIP [*from the dining-room*]. Is he in a hurry?

JAMES [*shortly*]. Yes.

EMILY. He says he *is* rather, dear.

PHILIP. Could n't he come and talk in here? It would n't interfere with my breakfast.

JAMES. No.

EMILY. He says he'd rather you came to *him*, darling.

PHILIP [*resigned*]. Oh, well.

EMILY [*to James*]. He'll be here directly, dear. Just sit down in front of the fire and make yourself comfortable with the paper. He won't keep you long.

[*She arranges him.*]

JAMES [*taking the paper*]. The morning is not the time to make one's self comfortable. It's a most dangerous habit. I nearly found myself dropping off in front of the fire just now. I don't like this hanging about, wasting the day. [*He opens the paper.*]

EMILY. You should have had a nice sleep, dear, while you could. We were up so late last night listening to Philip's stories.

JAMES. Yes, yes. [*He begins a yawn and stifles it hurriedly.*] You must n't neglect your duties, Emily. I've no doubt you have plenty to do.

EMILY. All right, James, then I'll leave you. But don't be hard on the boy.

JAMES [*sleepily*]. I shall be just, Emily; you can rely upon that.

EMILY [*going to the door*]. I don't think that's quite what I meant. [*She goes out.*]

[*James, who is now quite comfortable, begins to nod, He wakes up with a start, turns over the paper, and nods again. Soon he is breathing deeply with closed eyes.*]

. . . . . .

PHILIP [*coming in*]. Sorry to have kept you waiting, but I was a bit late for breakfast. [*He takes out his pipe.*] Are we going to talk business or what?

JAMES [*taking out his watch*]. A *bit* late! I make it just two hours.

PHILIP [*pleasantly*]. All right, Uncle James. Call it two hours late. Or twenty-two hours early for to-morrow's breakfast, if you like.

[*He sits down in a chair on the opposite side of the table from his uncle, and lights his pipe.*]

JAMES. You smoke now?

PHILIP [*staggered*]. I what?

JAMES [*nodding at his pipe*]. You smoke?

PHILIP. Good heavens! what did you think we *did* in France?

JAMES. Before you start smoking all over the house, I should have thought you would have asked your aunt's permission.

[*Philip looks at him in amazement, and then goes to the door.*]

PHILIP [*calling*]. Aunt Emily! . . . Aunt Emily! . . . Do you mind my smoking in here?

AUNT EMILY [*from upstairs*]. Of course not, darling.

PHILIP [*to James, as he returns to his chair*]. Of course not, darling. [*He puts back his pipe in his mouth.*]

JAMES. Now, understand once and for all, Philip, while you remain in my house I expect not only punctuality, but also civility and respect. I will *not* have impertinence.

PHILIP [*unimpressed*]. Well, that's what I want to talk to you about, Uncle James. About staying in your house, I mean.

JAMES. I don't know what you do mean.

PHILIP. Well, we don't get on too well together, and I thought perhaps I'd better take rooms somewhere. You could give me an allowance until I came into my money. Or I suppose you could give me the money now if you really liked. I don't quite know how father left it to me.

JAMES [*coldly*]. You come into your money when you are twenty-five. Your father very wisely felt that to trust a large sum to a mere boy of twenty-one was simply putting temptation in his way. Whether I have the power or not to alter his dispositions, I certainly don't propose to do so.

PHILIP. If it comes to that, I *am* twenty-five.

JAMES. Indeed? I had an impression that that event took place in about two years' time. When did you become twenty-five, may I ask?

PHILIP [*quietly*]. It was on the Somme. We were attacking the next day and my company was in support. We were in a so-called trench on the edge of a wood — a damned rotten place to be, and we got hell. The company commander sent back to ask if we could move. The C.O. said, "Certainly not; hang on." We hung on; doing nothing, you know — just hanging on and waiting for the next day. Of course, the Boche knew all about that. He had it on us nicely. . . . [*Sadly.*] Poor old Billy! he was one of the best — our company commander, you know. They got him, poor devil! That

left *me* in command of the company. I sent a runner back to ask if I could move. Well, I'd had a bit of a scout on my own and found a sort of trench five hundred yards to the right. Not what *you'd* call a trench, of course, but compared to that wood — well, it was absolutely Hyde Park. I described the position and asked if I could go there. My man never came back. I waited an hour and sent another man. He went west too. Well, I was n't going to send a third. It was murder. So I had to decide. We'd lost about half the company by this time, you see. Well, there were three things I could do — hang on, move to this other trench, against orders, or go back myself and explain the situation. . . . I moved. . . . And then I went back to the C.O. and told him I'd moved. . . . And then I went back to the company again. . . . [*Quietly.*] That was when I became twenty-five . . . or thirty-five . . . or forty-five.

JAMES [*recovering himself with an effort*]. Ah, yes, yes. [*He coughs awkwardly.*] No doubt, points like that frequently crop up in the trenches. I am glad that you did well out there, and I'm sure your Colonel would speak kindly of you; but when it comes to choosing a career for you now that you have left the Army, my advice is not altogether to be despised. Your father evidently thought so, or he would not have entrusted you to my care.

PHILIP. My father did n't foresee this war.

JAMES. Yes, yes, but you make too much of this war. All you young boys seem to think you've come back from France to teach us our business. You'll find that it is you who'll have to learn, not we.

PHILIP. I'm quite prepared to learn; in fact, I want to.

JAMES. Excellent. Then we can consider that settled.

PHILIP. Well, we have n't settled yet what business I'm going to learn.

JAMES. I don't think that's very difficult. I propose to take you into my business. You'll start at the bottom, of course, but it will be a splendid opening for you.

PHILIP [*thoughtfully*]. I see. So you've decided it for me? The jam business.

JAMES [*sharply*]. Is there anything to be ashamed of in that?

PHILIP. Oh, no, nothing at all. Only it does n't happen to appeal to me.

JAMES. If you knew which side your bread was buttered, it would appeal to you very considerably.

PHILIP. I'm afraid I can't see the butter for the jam.

JAMES. I don't want any silly jokes of that sort. You were glad enough to get it out there, I've no doubt.

PHILIP. Oh, yes. Perhaps that's why I'm so sick of it now. . . . No, it's no good, Uncle James; you must think of something else.

JAMES [*with a sneer*]. Perhaps *you've* thought of something else?

PHILIP. Well, I had some idea of being an architect —

JAMES. You propose to start learning to be an architect at twenty-three?

PHILIP [*smiling*]. Well, I could n't start before, could I?

JAMES. Exactly. And now you'll find it's too late.

PHILIP. Is it? Are n't there going to be any more architects, or doctors, or solicitors, or barristers? Because we've all lost four years of our lives, are all the professions going to die out?

JAMES. And how old do you suppose you'll be before you're earning money as an architect?

PHILIP. The usual time, whatever that may be. If I'm four years behind, so is everybody else.

JAMES. Well, I think it's high time you began to earn a living at once.

PHILIP. Look here, Uncle James, do you really think that

you can treat me like a boy who's just left school? Do you think four years at the front have made no difference at all?

JAMES. If there had been any difference, I should have expected it to take the form of an increased readiness to obey orders and recognize authority.

PHILIP [*regretfully*]. You are evidently determined to have a row. Perhaps I had better tell you once and for all that I refuse to go into the turnip and vegetable marrow business.

JAMES [*thumping the table angrily*]. And perhaps I'd better tell *you*, sir, once and for all, that I don't propose to allow rudeness from an impertinent young puppy.

PHILIP [*reminiscently*]. I remember annoying our Brigadier once. He was covered with red, had a very red face, about twenty medals, and a cold blue eye. He told me how angry he was for about five minutes while I stood to attention. I'm afraid you are n't nearly so impressive, Uncle James.

JAMES [*rather upset*]. Oh! [*Recovering himself.*] Fortunately I have other means of impressing you. The power of the purse goes a long way in this world. I propose to use it.

PHILIP. I see. . . . Yes . . . that's rather awkward, is n't it?

JAMES [*pleasantly*]. I think you'll find it very awkward.

PHILIP [*thoughtfully*]. Yes.

[*With an amused laugh James settles down to his paper as if the interview were over.*]

PHILIP [*to himself*]. I suppose I shall have to think of another argument.

[*He takes out a revolver from his pocket and fondles it affectionately.*]

JAMES [*looking up suddenly as he is doing this — amazed*]. What on earth are you doing?

PHILIP. Souvenir from France. Do you know, Uncle James, that this revolver has killed about twenty Germans?

JAMES [*shortly*]. Oh! Well, don't go playing about with it here, or you'll be killing Englishmen before you know where you are.

PHILIP. Well, you never know. [*He raises it leisurely and points it at his uncle.*] It's a nice little weapon.

JAMES [*angrily*]. Put it down, sir! You ought to have grown out of monkey tricks like that in the Army. You ought to know better than to point an unloaded revolver at anybody. That's the way accidents always happen.

PHILIP. Not when you've been on a revolver course and know all about it. Besides, it *is* loaded.

JAMES [*very angry because he is frightened suddenly*]. Put it down at once, sir! [*Philip turns it away from him and examines it carelessly.*] What's the matter with you? Have you gone mad suddenly?

PHILIP [*mildly*]. I thought you'd be interested in it. It's shot such a lot of Germans.

JAMES. Well, it won't want to shoot any more, and the sooner you get rid of it the better.

PHILIP. I wonder. Does it ever occur to you, Uncle James, that there are about a hundred thousand people in England who own revolvers, who are quite accustomed to them and — who have nobody to practise on now?

JAMES. No, sir, it certainly does n't.

PHILIP [*thoughtfully*]. I wonder if it will make any difference. You know, one gets so used to potting at people. It's rather difficult to realize suddenly that one ought n't to.

JAMES [*getting up*]. I don't know what the object of all this tomfoolery is, if it has one. But you understand that I

expect you to come to the office with me to-morrow at nine o'clock. Kindly see that you're punctual.

[*He turns to go away.*]

PHILIP [*softly*]. Uncle James.

JAMES [*over his shoulder*]. I have no more —

PHILIP [*in his parade voice*]. Damn it, sir, stand to attention when you talk to an officer! [*James instinctively turns round and stiffens himself.*] That's better; you can sit down if you like.

[*He motions James to his chair with the revolver.*]

JAMES [*going nervously to his chair*]. What does this bluff mean?

PHILIP. It is n't bluff, it's quite serious. [*Pointing the revolver at his uncle.*] Do sit down.

JAMES [*sitting down*]. Threats, eh?

PHILIP. Persuasion.

JAMES. At the point of the revolver? You settle your arguments by force? Good Heavens, sir! this is just the very thing that we were fighting to put down.

PHILIP. *We* were fighting! *We! We!* Uncle, you're a humorist.

JAMES. Well, "you," if you prefer it. Although those of us who stayed at home —

PHILIP. Yes, never mind about the excess-profits now. I can tell you quite well what we fought for. We used force to put down force. That's what I'm doing now. You were going to use force — the force of money — to make me do what you wanted. Now I'm using force to stop it. [*He levels the revolver again.*]

JAMES. You're — you're going to shoot your old uncle?

PHILIP. Why not? I've shot lots of old uncles — Landsturmers.

JAMES. But those were Germans! It's different shooting Germans. You're in England now. You could n't have a crime on your conscience like that.

PHILIP. Ah, but you must n't think that after four years of war one has quite the same ideas about the sanctity of human life. How could one?

JAMES. You 'll find that juries have kept pretty much the same ideas, I fancy.

PHILIP. Yes, but revolvers often go off accidentally. You said so yourself. This is going to be the purest accident. Can't you see it in the papers? "The deceased's nephew, who was obviously upset —"

JAMES. I suppose you think it 's brave to come back from the front and threaten a defenceless man with a revolver? Is that the sort of fair play they teach you in the Army?

PHILIP. Good Heavens, of course it is! You don't think that you wait until the other side has got just as many guns as you before you attack? You're really rather lucky. Strictly speaking, I ought to have thrown half a dozen bombs at you first. [*Taking one out of his pocket.*] As it happens, I've only got one.

JAMES [*thoroughly alarmed*]. Put that back at once.

PHILIP [*putting down the revolver and taking it in his hands*]. You hold it in the right hand — so — taking care to keep the lever down. Then you take the pin in the finger — so, and — but perhaps this does n't interest you?

JAMES [*edging his chair away*]. Put it down at once, sir! Good Heavens! anything might happen.

PHILIP [*putting it down and taking up the revolver again*]. Does it ever occur to you, Uncle James, that there are about three million people in England who know all about bombs, and how to throw them, and —

JAMES. It certainly does not occur to me. I should never dream of letting these things occur to me.

PHILIP [*looking at the bomb regretfully*]. It 's rather against my principles as a soldier, but just to make things a bit more fair — [*generously*] you shall have it.

[*He holds it out to him suddenly.*]

JAMES [*shrinking back again*]. Certainly not, sir. It might go off at any moment.

PHILIP [*putting it back in his pocket*]. Oh, no; it's quite useless; there's no detonator. . . . [*Sternly.*] Now, then, let 's talk business.

JAMES. What do you want me to do?

PHILIP. Strictly speaking, you should be holding your hands over your head and saying "Kamerad!" However, I'll let you off that. All I ask from you is that you should be reasonable.

JAMES. And if I refuse, you'll shoot me?

PHILIP. Well, I don't quite know, Uncle James. I expect we should go through this little scene again to-morrow. You have n't enjoyed it, have you? Well, there's lots more of it to come. We'll rehearse it every day. One day, if you go on being unreasonable, the thing will go off. Of course, you think that I should n't have the pluck to fire. But you can't be quite certain. It's a hundred to one that I shan't — only I might. Fear — it's a horrible thing. Elderly men die of it sometimes.

JAMES. Pooh! I'm not to be bluffed like that.

PHILIP [*suddenly*]. You're quite right; you're not that sort. I made a mistake. [*Aiming carefully.*] I shall have to do it straight off, after all. One — two —

JAMES [*on his knees, with uplifted hands, in an agony of terror*]. Philip! Mercy! What are your terms?

PHILIP [*picking him up by the scruff, and helping him into the chair*]. Good man, that's the way to talk. I'll get them for you. Make yourself comfortable in front of the fire till I come back. Here's the paper.

[*He gives his uncle the paper, and goes out into the hall.*]

. . . . . .

[*James opens his eyes with a start and looks round him in a bewildered way. He rubs his head, takes out his watch and looks at it, and then stares*

round the room again. The door from the dining-room opens, and Philip comes in with a piece of toast in his hand.]

PHILIP [*his mouth full*]. You wanted to see me, Uncle James?

JAMES [*still bewildered*]. That's all right, my boy, that's all right. What have you been doing?

PHILIP [*surprised*]. Breakfast. [*Putting the last piece in his mouth.*] Rather late, I'm afraid.

JAMES. That's all right. [*He laughs awkwardly.*]

PHILIP. Anything the matter? You don't look your usual bright self.

JAMES. I — er — seem to have dropped asleep in front of the fire. Most unusual thing for me to have done. Most unusual.

PHILIP. Let that be a lesson to you not to get up so early. Of course, if you're in the Army you can't help yourself. Thank Heaven, I'm out of it, and my own master again.

JAMES. Ah, that's what I wanted to talk to you about. Sit down, Philip. [*He indicates the chair by the fire.*]

PHILIP [*taking a chair by the table*]. You have that, uncle; I shall be all right here.

JAMES [*hastily*]. No, no; you come here. [*He gives Philip the armchair and sits by the table himself.*] I should be dropping off again. [*He laughs awkwardly.*]

PHILIP. Right-o.

[*He puts his hand to his pocket. Uncle James shivers and looks at him in horror. Philip brings out his pipe, and a sickly grin of relief comes into James's face.*]

JAMES. I suppose you smoked a lot in France?

PHILIP. Rather! Nothing else to do. It's allowed in here?

JAMES [*hastily*]. Yes, yes, of course. [*Philip lights his pipe.*] Well, now, Philip, what are you going to do, now you've left the Army?

PHILIP [*promptly*]. Burn my uniform and sell my revolver.

JAMES [*starting at the word "revolver"*]. Sell your revolver, eh?

PHILIP [*surprised*]. Well, I don't want it now, do I?

JAMES. No. . . . Oh, no. . . . Oh, most certainly not, I should say. Oh, I can't see why you should want it at all. [*With an uneasy laugh.*] You're in England now. No need for revolvers here — eh?

PHILIP [*staring at him*]. Well, no, I hope not.

JAMES [*hastily*]. Quite so. Well, now, Philip, what next? We must find a profession for you.

PHILIP [*yawning*]. I suppose so. I have n't really thought about it much.

JAMES. You never wanted to be an architect?

PHILIP [*surprised*]. Architect?

[*James rubs his head and wonders what made him think of architect.*]

JAMES. Or anything like that.

PHILIP. It's a bit late, is n't it?

JAMES. Well, if you're four years behind, so is everybody else.

[*He feels vaguely that he has heard this argument before.*]

PHILIP [*smiling*]. To tell the truth, I don't feel I mind much, anyway. Anything you like — except a commissionnaire. I absolutely refuse to wear uniform again.

JAMES. How would you like to come into the business?

PHILIP. The jam business? Well, I don't know. You would n't want me to salute you in the mornings?

JAMES. My dear boy, no!

PHILIP. All right, I'll try it if you like. I don't know if I shall be any good — what do you do?

JAMES. It's your experience in managing and — er — handling men which I hope will be of value.

PHILIP. Oh, I can do that all right. [*Stretching himself luxuriously.*] Uncle James, do you realize that I'm

never going to salute again, or wear a uniform, or get wet — really wet, I mean — or examine men's feet, or stand to attention when I'm spoken to, or — oh, lots more things. And, best of all, I'm never going to be frightened again. Have you ever known what it is to be afraid — really afraid?

JAMES [*embarrassed*]. I — er — well — [*He coughs.*]

PHILIP. No, you could n't — not really afraid of death, I mean. Well, that's over now. Good Lord! I could spend the rest of my life in the British Museum and be happy. . . .

JAMES [*getting up*]. All right, we'll try you in the office. I expect you want a holiday first, though.

PHILIP [*getting up*]. My dear uncle, this is holiday. Being in London is holiday. Buying an evening paper — wearing a waistcoat again — running after a bus — anything — it's all holiday.

JAMES. All right, then, come along with me now, and I'll introduce you to Mr. Bamford.

PHILIP. Right. Who's he?

JAMES. Our manager. A little stiff, but a very good fellow. He'll be delighted to hear that you are coming into the firm.

PHILIP [*smiling*]. Perhaps I'd better bring my revolver, in case he is n't.

JAMES [*laughing with forced heartiness as they go together to the door*]. Ha, ha! A good joke that! Ha, ha, ha! A good joke — but only a joke, of course. Ha, ha! He, he, he!

[*Philip goes out. James, following him, turns at the door, and looks round the room in a bewildered way. Was it a dream, or was n't it? He will never be quite certain.*]

CURTAIN

FOLLOWERS[1]

A "CRANFORD" SKETCH

BY HAROLD BRIGHOUSE

CHARACTERS

LUCINDA BAINES.
HELEN MASTERS.
SUSAN CROWTHER.
COLONEL REDFERN.

THE SCENE *is the parlour of Miss Lucinda Baines at Cranford, in June, 1859. It is the room of an old maid of the period, overcrowded with fragile furniture, spattered with antimacassars and china. The room is filled with the bright light of a summer's morning. Bushes and green hedge are seen through the window center. The door is left.*

Susan Crowther, a ruddy country girl of twenty-two, shows in Helen Masters, a young lady of the same age, in summer outdoor clothes.

SUSAN. Miss Baines says, will you please take a seat, Miss Masters, and she'll be down in a minute.

HELEN [*not sitting*]. Susan, go at once and tell your mistress I shall be seriously offended if she has gone upstairs to change her cap on my account.

SUSAN [*severely*]. Miss Baines would not think of receiving a visitor without changing her cap, Miss Masters.

HELEN. I am not a visitor here, and, if I am, this is an early morning-call and —

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SUSAN [*finally*]. Miss Baines is changing her cap and there 's an end of it. She won't be long.

HELEN [*defeated, sitting*]. Oh, I am sorry, but this was my only opportunity of seeing her. I return to London this afternoon.

SUSAN [*awed*]. By the train, Miss?

HELEN [*smiling*]. Yes.

SUSAN. You have more courage than I have.

HELEN. Tell me, Susan, your mistress keeps well?

SUSAN. She 's well enough. Will worry herself, you know. Solomon has been a great disappointment to her.

HELEN. Solomon? Who is Solomon?

SUSAN. Solomon is the cat. He had kittens, and the shock nearly sent Miss Baines to her bed.

HELEN. Oh, dear!

SUSAN. We still call her Solomon because she 's used to it, but things will never be the same again. Miss Baines feels that Solomon has deceived her.

HELEN. And you, Susan?

SUSAN. Oh, I am quite well. Miss — [*pausing awkwardly, then*] — Miss Masters!

HELEN. Yes. Nothing wrong?

SUSAN. No, but — Miss Masters — you are one the mistress listens to. She 's — there is one thing that sorely troubles me, and, if you would speak a word for me, I'm sure —

HELEN. What is it, Susan?

SUSAN. Well, Miss, when I came here ten years ago — straight from the Charity School it was — Miss Baines said when she took me, "Now, Susan, no followers," she said, and I said, "No, mem, never." I passed my word when I was too young to know, and there 's many would n't keep it on that account, but —

HELEN. Do you want followers, Susan?

SUSAN. No, Miss, I don't. Not followers. One follower at a time 's enough for any woman.

HELEN. You've somebody in mind?

SUSAN. I've seen James Brown look at me and I would n't say if it was n't for my promise but that James —

HELEN. I see.

SUSAN. But I promised and I'm not the one to break my word, only when I try to put it to the mistress it's as if she saw it coming, and there's something in her eye that stops me asking. And it's not as if she never had a follower herself.

HELEN [*rising*]. Susan!

SUSAN [*defending herself*]. A body can't live ten years in Cranford without hearing that old story of Miss Baines and —

HELEN. Hush, Susan.

SUSAN. Well, it's true, and, what's more, he's back from India now. I've seen him.

HELEN. Mr. Redfern is back?

SUSAN. You spoke his name, not I. Yes, he's back.

HELEN. When?

SUSAN. I only know I was carrying the basket yesterday while Miss Baines bought the grocery in Mr. Wilson's shop, and there was a gentleman inside when we went in, buying matches to light his cheroot —

HELEN. A cheroot in Cranford High Street!

SUSAN. Yes, Miss, and he raised his hat to Miss Baines, and she gave a jump and held my arm hard, and just said, "Mr. Redfern" — gasping, like that — "Mr. Redfern," and went on giving her orders as if nothing had happened. She's a brave woman, though I say it that's her own servant. And, if she had him once, why may n't I have James Brown?

HELEN. I will see what I can do, Susan.

[*Enter Lucinda. She is a fragile old maid of fifty, delicate in her dress, with transparent complexion, grey clothes, and lace cap.*]

LUCINDA. Helen!

HELEN. Dear Miss Baines. [*They kiss. Exit Susan.*] Pardon this early call.

LUCINDA. You could not come too early, Helen.

[*They sit.*]

HELEN. This was my only chance. I arrived yesterday and return to-day.

LUCINDA. Cranford will not see much of you now.

HELEN. Now?

LUCINDA. I have heard the great news, Helen. You are betrothed.

HELEN. Yes, Miss Baines. [*Pause.*] You do not wish me joy.

LUCINDA. Child, I have always wished you every joy.

HELEN. I want you to know Harry, Miss Baines. He is here with me, but I know no gentleman has entered your house as long as I remember, yet I hoped you might make an exception in my case.

LUCINDA. Helen, you are not asking me to receive your affianced husband in this house?

HELEN. Forgive the recklessness of my desire. I have so great a wish that Harry should see this room where you taught me to work my samplers and to knit.

LUCINDA. I should take great pleasure in seeing him if I could meet him out. Here, as you know, I have no apartment suited for the entertainment of a gentleman. I should be in agonies for the safety of my china. I was for long uneasy about Solomon until I found that cats tread with the most prudent delicacy. But men's movements are singularly lacking in grace.

HELEN. Harry is very gentle.

LUCINDA. Without doubt, my dear. But a man is so much in the way in a house. He must himself feel out of place.

HELEN [*smiling*]. Would you have them live in the stables?

LUCINDA. I make no rule for others, Helen. For myself, I am quite decided.

HELEN. And for Susan too?

LUCINDA. Susan, my dear?

HELEN. Susan is in love, but she will not break the promise made to you.

LUCINDA. My dear, I said, "No followers," and I meant no followers. If Susan is in love she has her fortnightly evening, and I am broad-minded enough not to ask too closely with whom she walks to the Dorcas Meeting, but my kitchen is no place for Susan's sweetheart. Men of our own order speak habitually in voices too loud for a room, let alone one of Susan's class.

HELEN [*pleading*]. She finds it lonely, I am afraid.

LUCINDA. Susan has her work.

HELEN. Do you never feel lonely here in the dark winter evenings?

LUCINDA. Lonely, child? I used to be afraid of loneliness, and once, when there had been some burglaries in Cranford, I did think how much safer I should have felt with a husband by my side . . . Does it shock you to hear me talk of husbands?

HELEN. No, no. I try not to speak the word myself, because I know that one should not before the time, but it cannot really be immodest.

LUCINDA. Yes, I remember the time when I looked forward to being married as much as any one, but the person I once thought I might be married to went far away because I said "No" when I did n't mean it, only he thought I did, and I don't know to this day why I did say "No" when all of me was throbbing to say "Yes." Oh, Helen, Helen, be very happy with your Harry. Thank God *you* did not say "No."

HELEN. I hope I am a modest woman, Miss Baines. I said "No" twice, but Harry asked three times, and at the third I thought it became me to yield.

LUCINDA. Mr. Redfern asked but once and then he went away.

HELEN. Mr. Redfern!

LUCINDA. That was his name. I did not mean to mention it. Pray forget I did so, Helen. Old memories are best forgotten.

HELEN. Mr. Redfern. But . . . Miss Baines . . . there is still the future.

LUCINDA. No, there are ghosts of the past that are hard to lay, but for me there is no future. I have lived so long with my shadows that I should fear the light.

HELEN. Your shadows?

LUCINDA. Oh, you will not come to live in the shadow-world. There in the light your husband and your children are waiting and calling for you to come.

HELEN. You make me feel ashamed.

LUCINDA. Ashamed? Whatever for? Be proud of life and joy.

HELEN. I have so much. I want so much and you are contented with so little.

LUCINDA. I? Life is for the young, life and the golden day. For me, age and the shadows. Yes, Helen, I used to be afraid of loneliness. I used to weep because the days were long and the nights were longer still.

HELEN. And now?

LUCINDA. Now I have the children of my dreams. They are just like other people's children, Helen, only mine are all, all my own. They don't grow up. They don't grow big and clumsy. They are always small and neat, and beautiful and well-behaved. They come to me when I am alone, and then, you see, I am not alone. They sit upon those seats that I keep near the fire, so that in winter they can watch the glow — that is Mary's, and the little hassock there is John's — and their boots are never dirty, and they don't disturb the antimacassars,

and their voices are soft and low. And in the night I have wakened with the clasp of their arms about my neck, and my darlings put up their little mouths to mine to be kissed just as I've seen real babies do to real mothers.

HELEN. I wonder if it is better so.

LUCINDA [*with energy*]. No, no. Never. Forget this, Helen. I have spoken things I did not mean to speak. Tell me more of your betrothal. Is your trousseau far advanced? You must have lavender from my garden. Lavender for one's dresses and rose-leaves for one's rooms. And I have both for you.

[*Enter Susan.*]

SUSAN [*awkwardly*]. Miss Baines.

LUCINDA. What is it, Susan?

SUSAN. There 's a gentleman at the door, and he is asking for you.

LUCINDA. A gentleman!

SUSAN [*volubly*]. Oh, Miss Baines, if you please, it 's the gentleman we saw yesterday in Mr. Wilson's shop, only he is dressed grander still to-day. I told him you could n't see him, but I might as well have talked at the wall of a house.

LUCINDA [*pauses, then collects her courage*]. I will see him, Susan, please.

SUSAN [*staggered*]. In here?

LUCINDA. Yes.

SUSAN. Save us, what goings-on! [*Exit Susan.*]

LUCINDA. Helen, stand by me. This is my hour of trial. Don't leave me, child.

HELEN. Not if you wish me to remain.

LUCINDA. My courage is not all I could desire. Thank God, you are here, Helen. It 's a mercy you came and I changed my cap for you.

HELEN. You 're looking splendid, dear, you have a colour.

LUCINDA. I am all of a twitter. Is my cap straight?

HELEN. You are perfect.

LUCINDA. Helen, what should I offer him? Do gentlemen take gooseberry wine? Do they drink tea in the morning? I don't know anything. I am so ignorant of men.

HELEN. He will not want anything but you.

[*Enter Susan, smirking, and Charles Redfern. Exit Susan without announcing. Redfern is a spare, soldierly figure of fifty-five, grey-haired, very brown, dressed carefully. He is shy, talking at one moment as if addressing a squad, then, remembering, is subdued for a time before resuming his usual commanding tone.*]

LUCINDA [*bowing*]. Mr. Redfern.

REDFERN [*bowing*]. Colonel, madam, Colonel, retired from the service of the East India Company.

LUCINDA [*introducing*]. Colonel Redfern. My god-daughter, Miss Masters. [*They bow.*]

REDFERN. Your servant, madam.

LUCINDA. Will you sit down, Colonel? [*Redfern looks doubtfully.*] . . . er . . . That chair is stronger than it looks. I think you have no cause for apprehension.

REDFERN [*sitting*]. I thank you, madam.

[*It is a very low chair and his long legs make him acutely conscious of it.*]

LUCINDA. May I offer you refreshment, Colonel? A little gooseberry wine, or —

REDFERN. I thank you, no. I do not like gooseberries.

[*He looks at Helen, resenting her presence. Pause.*]

LUCINDA [*embarrassed but brave*]. You must find Cranford a dull place after your martial career, Colonel Redfern.

REDFERN. I find it very pleasant to be back in England.

LUCINDA. It is safer, I have no doubt. Did you find the Asiatics very fierce?

REDFERN [*glancing at Helen*]. I have not come here to talk about myself, Miss Baines.

LUCINDA. But yours has been an adventurous life. Surely —

REDFERN. Pardon me, madam, a soldier's tales are not for a lady's ear. My life is of less interest to you than yours is to me.

LUCINDA. Mine! But I —

REDFERN [*rising*]. Yes. That is what I have come to hear, and as Miss Masters is your god-daughter she must know all about you, and I fear it would only weary her to hear you telling me.

LUCINDA. I am sure Helen will not mind. I have nothing to tell.

HELEN [*rising*]. Yes, Colonel Redfern, I ought to leave you two old friends together.

LUCINDA [*rising, frightened*]. But, Helen! Colonel, your arrival interrupted us. Helen was telling me of her betrothal.

REDFERN [*bowing*]. I congratulate Miss Masters.

HELEN. Thank you, Colonel Redfern.

LUCINDA. Go on, Helen.

HELEN. Really, Miss Baines, there is nothing more to tell.

REDFERN. Ah! And so?

HELEN. May I have a word with Susan before I go?

LUCINDA. You are not going!

HELEN. I must.

LUCINDA. But —

HELEN. I will step in later on to say farewell. Good morning, Colonel Redfern.

REDFERN [*opening door and bowing*]. Good morning, Miss Masters (*as she passes him*), and bless you for a sensible girl.

[*Exit Helen. He turns from closing door and speaks commandingly.*]

Now, Lucy.

LUCINDA [*faintly protesting*]. Colonel Redfern!

REDFERN. I remind you, Lucy, that my Christian name is Charles.

LUCINDA. I had not forgotten.

REDFERN. Nor the last time you called me by it, I warrant. This very room, was n't it? I never had such a downfall in my life. In I came, found you alone, popped the question, and when you rapped out your "No" I could have dropped through the floor for simple wonderment, I'd made so sure you were only waiting to be asked. I've taken some gruelling in my time, but I was never harder hit than on that day — how many? — twenty-five years ago?

LUCINDA. Twenty-five years, three months, ten days. It was March seventeenth, 1834.

REDFERN. Ah? So you've not forgotten. No, nor I. Nor the way I cut and ran like a whipped dog with my tail between my legs — all the way to India as fast as sail and wind would carry me. And, do you know, Lucy, I've been trying ever since the day I landed there to get home again. For twenty-five years I've been trying. That's why I never wrote. I always expected to be here myself as quickly as a letter. At first I could n't get leave, and if I had I could n't have paid my passage, and when I got leave I had fever, and when I recovered from the fever I'd to go on active service — and when I was better from my wound —

LUCINDA. You were wounded!

REDFERN. A trifle that time, but it kept me there till the next affair, and so it's gone on all these years till the Mutiny came, and I went through that without a scratch, and thought it time to send my papers in and make for home. And that's the last word I'll say about myself. Now, Lucy, what have you been doing?

LUCINDA. I? Living at home.

REDFERN. Do you know what home means to me? I used to hear the other fellows talk of home — mothers, sisters, sweethearts, wives, and children. Home meant something to us all. It meant Cranford to me.

LUCINDA. But you had n't used to live in Cranford.

REDFERN. You did, and Cranford meant you. Lucy, don't you know why I have come home?

LUCINDA. Have you not reached the age for retirement?

REDFERN. Age? I am as young as on the day I went away. I've come to ask you a question, Lucy. It's the doubt that lay heavy on my mind the day I landed in India, and made me want to take the next ship home, and it's not grown less since then. It's this — suppose I had n't listened to you, suppose I had asked again, would you still have told me "No"?

LUCINDA. How can I tell what I should have said?

REDFERN. Come, Lucy, you had the date off pat. You 'd not forgotten that.

LUCINDA. It is all so many years ago.

REDFERN. You mean I am to let bygones be bygones.

LUCINDA. If you please, Colonel Redfern.

REDFERN. No, madam, I do not please. But I obey. The past is past — but there remains the future.

LUCINDA. Are you going to make your future home in Cranford, Colonel?

REDFERN. I hope so, Lucy. I shall stay on at the George until I've looked round and then, I trust, anchorage.

LUCINDA. Then no doubt we shall have friends in common at whose houses we may chance to meet sometimes.

REDFERN. Other people's houses! You're a cordial hostess, Lucy.

LUCINDA. Colonel Redfern, you have recalled the occasion when last you visited me. My father was already dead, and, since the day of your call, no gentleman has

entered my house until to-day. Your coming here breaks all my rules.

REDFERN. Then I think it's time you had a little male society.

LUCINDA. This is an old maid's house.

REDFERN. Old maid be hanged. I beg your pardon, Lucy. A soldier's bluntness. But I am seeing you now as I saw you then with your bonny face and those dear blue eyes with what I fancied was the love-light in them, though now I know that it was just the sunshine of your soul, and the smile that has made my fever-bed a thing of joy because I could lie still and think of you and — and — yes, madam, I will say it — the neatest ankle in the world peeping out below your petticoats. The Lord forgive me for recalling such a thing, but you would n't believe the comfort that ankle 's been to me in India.

LUCINDA. Colonel, had n't you better rub your eyes?

REDFERN. Why, madam?

LUCINDA. To see me as I am.

REDFERN. I see no change. It might have been yesterday.

LUCINDA. You are laughing at me.

REDFERN. I do not laugh at my divinity.

LUCINDA. Then it is your pleasure, sir, to be gallant, and I suggest you find a better subject for your gallantry than a lean and wrinkled —

REDFERN. Lucy, have you a looking-glass?

LUCINDA. I see my wrinkles in it every day.

REDFERN. Your glass tells lies.

LUCINDA. Colonel, I am too old for compliments. May I ask you to state what is the object of your visit?

REDFERN. The object, madam? Upon my word, you are a little short.

LUCINDA. I find you, sir, a little long.

REDFERN. Very well, madam, I will be brief. It is not the custom of the Service to beat about the bush. I have an object, and the object is to ask you to be my wife. It's the second time of asking, Lucy, and it's a plaguey long time since the first, but that was not my fault. It's the lady's privilege to change her mind. Won't you change yours?

LUCINDA. Yes, Charles, my mind is changed.

REDFERN [*approaching gladly*]. Lucy?

LUCINDA [*backing with hand up*]. You do not understand.

REDFERN. I understand that you have changed your mind, and —

LUCINDA. Charles, when I said "No," it was my lips that spoke. My mind, my heart were aching to say "Yes" — five-and-twenty years ago. To-day I am all united when I answer "No."

REDFERN. Ah, but I'll not take "No" this time. I'll ask and ask again until —

LUCINDA. Till what, Charles? Till I become a girl again? Your asking will not bring back my youth, nor yours.

REDFERN. Mine? Time does not matter if love keeps young.

LUCINDA. Has yours kept young?

REDFERN. It is young and fresh and strong as on the day I went away. It's never flagged. It's —

LUCINDA. And I will tell you why. Because you went away and had a great career in India. You put your love aside and filled your mind with other thoughts.

REDFERN. Not filled.

LUCINDA. Oh, sparing me a small recess, securely sealed, as I seal up my autumn plums. You took it out sometimes, that thought of me, to polish up and put it back in its recess until the next campaign was over and gave you leisure for another look. But I'd no splendid wars to occupy my mind. I had no seal to put upon my love to

keep it fresh. The pain was great until Time came to heal the open sore. Time put a halo round your love for me, but Time killed mine for you.

REDFERN. Lucy, it is not too late. Love does n't die. It sleeps. Let me awaken yours to life.

LUCINDA. It has been too late for many years. Charles, I want you to understand. It is too late. I do not look for happiness. I have contentment.

REDFERN. And what have I?

LUCINDA. You have had your life, a full life, Charles, a man's life.

REDFERN. I have lived on hopes. I can't live on regrets.

LUCINDA. Change them to memories.

REDFERN. Of what?

LUCINDA. Of what? For you the years have brought a great career. For me catastrophe.

REDFERN. Then — then is there no hope for me, Lucy?

LUCINDA. None.

REDFERN [*moving towards door*]. In India, I have not known defeat.

LUCINDA. You are back in England now, Colonel.

REDFERN. Colonel!

LUCINDA [*extending hand*]. Good-bye, Charles.

REDFERN [*taking it, appealingly*]. Lucy! [*She shakes her head.*] Good-bye.

[*Exit Redfern. Lucy sits, opens the locket she wears on a chain round her neck and buries it against her face, kissing it. Enter Helen softly.*]

HELEN. May I come in?

LUCINDA [*closing locket*]. Helen, did I disappoint you greatly when I said I could not receive your Harry?

HELEN. We both hoped very much that he might come.

LUCINDA. Helen, tell him from me that he may come, just once, if he will wipe his boots most carefully and sit there quietly in the centre of the room.

HELEN. Oh, thank you, Miss Baines. You can't tell how much pleasure you will give us both.

[*Exit Helen. Miss Baines carefully straightens her antimacassars. Susan knocks.*]

LUCINDA. Come in.

[*Susan enters.*]

SUSAN [*awed*]. Miss Baines!

LUCINDA. What is it, Susan?

SUSAN. The gentleman.

LUCINDA. Yes?

SUSAN. He gave me this. [*Showing sovereign.*] Am I to keep it, mem?

LUCINDA. Certainly, Susan.

SUSAN. He said it was for a new gown or — or a present for my sweetheart and — Oh, Miss, I do not want a gown, and I do so want a sweetheart and I don't care if it is forward to say it, for I do.

LUCINDA. You remember I said "No followers," Susan.

SUSAN. Yes, Miss, I have not forgotten, nor likely to, neither.

LUCINDA. You are young, Susan.

SUSAN. Not me. I'm twenty-three in November.

LUCINDA. Yes, you're young.

SUSAN. Too young for a sweetheart, Miss?

LUCINDA. No, Susan. I did say you were to have no followers, but if you meet with a man you like and let me know, and I find on proper inquiry that he is respectable, I shall have no objection to his coming to see you once a week, if he will promise to move carefully in the kitchen and abstain from raising his voice.

SUSAN [*kneeling at Lucinda's feet*]. Oh, Miss Baines!

LUCINDA [*simply*]. God forbid that I should grieve any young hearts.

CURTAIN

A SUNNY MORNING [1]

A Comedy

By SERAFIN and JOAQUIN ALVAREZ QUINTERO
Translated from the Spanish by Lucretia Xavier Floyd

CHARACTERS

Doña Laura.
Petra, *her maid.*
Don Gonzalo.
Juanito, *his servant.*
Time: *The present.*

Scene *laid in a retired part of a park in Madrid, Spain. A bench at right. Bright, sunny morning in autumn. Doña Laura, a handsome old lady of about 70, with white hair and of very refined appearance, although elderly, her bright eyes and entire manner prove her mental facilities are unimpaired. She enters accompanied by her maid Petra, upon whose arm she leans with one hand, while the other holds a parasol which she uses as a cane.*

DOÑA LAURA. I am so glad we have arrived. I feared my seat would be occupied. What a beautiful morning!

PETRA. The sun is rather hot.

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, to you who are only 20 years old. [*She sits down on the bench.*] Oh, I feel more tired to-day than usual. [*Noticing Petra, who seems impatient.*] Go, if you wish to chat with your guard.

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PETRA. He is not my guard, Señora; he belongs to the park.

DOÑA LAURA. He belongs more to you than to the park. Go seek him, but remain within calling distance.

PETRA. I see him over there waiting for me.

DOÑA LAURA. Do not remain away more than ten minutes.

PETRA. Very well, Señora. [*Walks toward right, but is detained.*]

DOÑA LAURA. Wait a moment.

PETRA. What does the Señora wish?

DOÑA LAURA. You are carrying away the bread crumbs.

PETRA. Very true. I don't know where my head is.

DOÑA LAURA [*smiling*]. I do. It is where your heart is — with your guard.

PETRA. Here, Señora. [*She hands Doña Laura a small bag. Exit Petra.*]

DOÑA LAURA. Adios. [*Glancing toward trees.*] Here come the rogues. They know just when to expect me. [*She rises, walks toward right, throws three handfuls of bread crumbs.*] These are for the most daring, these for the gluttons, and these for the little ones which are the biggest rogues. Ha, ha. [*She returns to her seat and watches with a pleased expression the pigeons feeding.*] There, that big one is always the first. That little fellow is the least timid. I believe he would eat from my hand. That one takes his piece and flies to that branch. He is a philosopher. But from where do they all come? It seems as if the news had been carried. Ha, ha. Don't quarrel. There is enough for all. To-morrow I'll bring more.

[*Enter Don Gonzalo and Juanito. Don Gonzalo is an old gentleman over 70, gouty and impatient. He leans upon Juanito's arm and drags his feet along as he walks. He displays ill temper.*]

DON GONZALO. Idling their time away. They should be saying Mass.

JUANITO. You can sit here, Señor. There is only a lady.

[*Doña Laura turns her head and listens to the dialogue.*]

DON GONZALO. I won't, Juanito. I want a bench to myself.

JUANITO. But there is none.

DON GONZALO. But that one over there is mine.

JUANITO. But there are three priests sitting there.

DON GONZALO. Let them get up. Have they gone, Juanito?

JUANITO. No, indeed. They are in animated conversation.

DON GONZALO. Just as if they were glued to the seat. No hope of their leaving. Come this way, Juanito. [*They walk toward birds.*]

DOÑA LAURA [*indignantly*]. Look out!

DON GONZALO [*turning his head*]. Are you talking to me, Señora?

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, to you.

DON GONZALO. What do you wish?

DOÑA LAURA. You have scared away the birds who were feeding on bread crumbs.

DON GONZALO. What do I care about the birds!

DOÑA LAURA. But I do.

DON GONZALO. This is a public park.

DOÑA LAURA. Then why do you complain that the priests have taken your bench?

DON GONZALO. Señora, we have not been introduced to each other. I do not know why you take the liberty of addressing me. Come, Juanito. [*Both exit.*]

DOÑA LAURA. What an ill-natured old man. Why must some people get so fussy and cross when they reach a certain age? I am glad. He lost that bench, too. Serves

him right for scaring the birds. He is furious. Yes, yes; find a seat if you can. Poor fellow! He is wiping the perspiration from his face. Here he comes. A carriage would not raise more dust than he does with his feet.

[*Enter Don Gonzalo and Juanito.*]

DON GONZALO. Have the priests gone yet, Juanito?

JUANITO. No, indeed, Señor. They are still there.

DON GONZALO. The authorities should place more benches here for these sunny mornings. Well, I suppose I must resign myself and sit on the same bench with the old lady. [*Muttering to himself, he sits at the extreme end of Doña Laura's bench and looks at her indignantly. Touches his hat as he greets her.*] Good morning.

DOÑA LAURA. What, you here again?

DON GONZALO. I repeat that we have not been introduced.

DOÑA LAURA. I am responding to your greeting.

DON GONZALO. Good morning should be answered by good morning, and that is what you should have said.

DOÑA LAURA. And you should have asked permission to sit on this bench, which is mine.

DON GONZALO. The benches here are public property.

DOÑA LAURA. Why, you said the one the priests occupied was yours.

DON GONZALO. Very well, very well. I have nothing more to say. [*Between his teeth.*] Doting old woman. She should be at home with her knitting and counting her beads.

DOÑA LAURA. Don't grumble any more. I 'm not going to leave here just to please you.

DON GONZALO [*brushing the dust from his shoes with his handkerchief*]. If the grounds were sprinkled more freely it would be an improvement.

DOÑA LAURA. What an idea, to brush your shoes with your handkerchief.

DON GONZALO. What?

DOÑA LAURA. Do you use a shoe brush as a handkerchief?

DON GONZALO. By what right do you criticize my actions?

DOÑA LAURA. By the rights of a neighbor.

DON GONZALO. Juanito, give me my book. I do not care to hear any more nonsense.

DOÑA LAURA. You are very polite.

DON GONZALO. Pardon me, Señora, but if you did not interfere with what does not concern you —

DOÑA LAURA. I generally say what I think.

DON GONZALO. And say more than you should. Give me the book, Juanito.

JUANITO. Here it is, Señor. [*Juanito takes book from pocket, hands it to Don Gonzalo: then exits.*]

[*Don Gonzalo, casting indignant glances at Doña Laura, puts on an enormous pair of glasses, takes from his pocket a reading-glass, adjusts both to suit him, opens his book.*]

DOÑA LAURA. I thought you were going to take out a telescope now.

DON GONZALO. What, again?

DOÑA LAURA. Your sight must be fine.

DON GONZALO. Many times better than yours.

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, it is very evident.

DON GONZALO. Many hares and partridges could bear testimony to my words.

DOÑA LAURA. Do you hunt?

DON GONZALO. I did, and even now —

DOÑA LAURA. Oh, yes, of course.

DON GONZALO. Yes, Señora. Every Sunday I take my gun and dog, you understand, and go to one of my properties near Aravaca, just to kill time.

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, to kill time. That is all you can kill.

DON GONZALO. Do you think so? I could show you a wild boar's head in my study —

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, and I could show you a tiger's skin in my boudoir. What an argument!

DON GONZALO. Very well, Señora, please allow me to read. I do not feel like having more conversation.

DOÑA LAURA. Well, keep quiet then.

DON GONZALO. But first I shall take a pinch of snuff. [*Takes out snuffbox.*] Will you have some? [*Offers box to Doña Laura.*]

DOÑA LAURA. If it is good?

DON GONZALO. It is of the finest. You will like it.

DOÑA LAURA [*taking pinch of snuff*]. It clears my head.

DON GONZALO. And mine.

DOÑA LAURA. Do you sneeze?

DON GONZALO. Yes, Senora, three times.

DOÑA LAURA. And so do I. What a coincidence!

[*After taking the snuff, they await the sneezes, making grimaces, and then sneeze alternately three times each.*]

DON GONZALO. There, I feel better.

DOÑA LAURA. So do I. [*Aside.*] The snuff has made peace between us.

DON GONZALO. You will excuse me if I read aloud?

DOÑA LAURA. Read as you please; you will not disturb me.

DON GONZALO (*reading*]. "All love is sad, but sad and all, it is the best thing that exists." That is from Campoamor.

DOÑA LAURA. Ah!

DON GONZALO [*reading*]. "The daughters of the mothers I once loved, kiss me now as they would kiss a wooden image." Those lines are in the humorous vein.

DOÑA LAURA [*laughing*]. So I see.

DON GONZALO. There are some beautiful poems in this book. Listen: "Twenty years have passed. He returns."

DOÑA LAURA. You cannot imagine how it affects me to see you reading with all those glasses.

DON GONZALO. Can it be possible that you read without requiring any?

DOÑA LAURA. Certainly.

DON GONZALO. At your age? You must be jesting.

DOÑA LAURA. Pass me the book, please. [*Takes book, reads aloud.*] "Twenty years have passed. He returns. And each upon beholding the other exclaims — Can it be possible that this is he? Merciful heavens, can this be she?" [*Doña Laura returns book to Don Gonzalo.*]

DON GONZALO. Indeed, you are to be envied for your wonderful eyesight.

DOÑA LAURA [*aside*]. I knew the lines from memory.

DON GONZALO. I am very fond of good verse, very fond. I even composed some in my youth.

DOÑA LAURA. Good ones?

DON GONZALO. Of all kinds. I was a great friend of Espronceda, Zorrilla, Becquer, and others. I first met Zorrilla in America.

DOÑA LAURA. Why, have you been in America?

DON GONZALO. Several times. The first time I went I was only six years old.

DOÑA LAURA. Columbus must have carried you in one of his caravels.

DON GONZALO [*laughing*]. Not quite as bad as that. I am old, I admit, but I did not know Ferdinand and Isabella. [*They both laugh.*] I was also a great friend of Campoamor. I met him in Valencia. I am a native of that city.

DOÑA LAURA. You are?

DON GONZALO. I was brought up there and there I spent my early youth. Have you ever visited that city?

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, Señor. Not far from Valencia there was a mansion that if still there, should retain memories of me. I spent there several seasons. This was many, many years ago. It was near the sea, concealed among lemon and orange trees. They called it — let me see, what did they call it? — "Maricela."

DON GONZALO [*startled*]. Maricela?

DOÑA LAURA. Maricela. Is the name familiar to you?

DON GONZALO. Yes, very familiar. If my memory serves me right, for we forget as we grow old, there lived in that mansion the most beautiful woman I have ever seen, and I assure you I have seen a few. Let me see — what was her name? Laura — Laura — Laura Lorente.

DOÑA LAURA [*startled*]. Laura Lorente?

DON GONZALO. Yes. [*They look at each other strangely.*]

DOÑA LAURA [*recovering herself*]. Nothing. You reminded me of my best friend.

DON GONZALO. How strange!

DOÑA LAURA. It is strange. She was called "The Silver Maiden."

DON GONZALO. Precisely, "The Silver Maiden." By that name she was known in that locality. I seem to see her as if she were before me now, at that window of the red roses. Do you remember that window?

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, I remember. It was that of her room.

DON GONZALO. She spent many hours there. I mean in my days.

DOÑA LAURA [*sighing*]. And in mine, too.

DON GONZALO. She was ideal. Fair as a lily, jet black hair and black eyes, with a very sweet expression. She seemed to cast a radiance wherever she was. Her figure was beautiful, perfect. "What forms of sovereign beauty God models in human sculpture!" She was a dream.

DOÑA LAURA [*aside*]. If you but knew that dream was now by your side, you would realize what dreams are worth. [*Aloud.*] She was very unfortunate and had a sad love affair.

DON GONZALO. Very sad. [*They look at each other.*]

DOÑA LAURA. You know of it?

DON GONZALO. Yes.

DOÑA LAURA [*aside*]. Strange are the ways of Providence! This man is my early lover.

DON GONZALO. The gallant lover, if we refer to the same affair —

DOÑA LAURA. To the duel?

DON GONZALO. Precisely, to the duel. The gallant lover was — my cousin, of whom I was very fond.

DOÑA LAURA. Oh, yes, a cousin. My friend told me in one of her letters the story of that love affair, truly romantic. He, your cousin, passed by on horseback every morning by the rose path under her window, and tossed up to her balcony a bouquet of flowers which she caught.

DON GONZALO. And later in the afternoon, the gallant horseman would return by the same path, and catch the bouquet of flowers she would toss him. Was it not so?

DOÑA LAURA. Yes. They wanted to marry her to a merchant whom she did not fancy.

DON GONZALO. And one night, when my cousin watched under her window to hear her sing, this new lover presented himself unexpectedly.

DOÑA LAURA. And insulted your cousin.

DON GONZALO. There was a quarrel.

DOÑA LAURA. And later a duel.

DON GONZALO. Yes, at sunrise, on the beach, and the merchant was badly wounded. My cousin had to conceal himself for a few days and later to fly.

DOÑA LAURA. You seem to know the story perfectly.

DON GONZALO. And so do you.

DOÑA LAURA. I have told you that my friend related it to me.

DON GONZALO. And my cousin to me. [*Aside.*] This woman is Laura. What a strange fate has brought us together again.

DOÑA LAURA [*aside*]. He does not suspect who I am. Why tell him? Let him preserve his illusion.

DON GONZALO [*aside*]. She does not suspect she is talking to her old lover. How can she? I will not reveal my identity.

DOÑA LAURA. And was it you, by chance, who advised your cousin to forget Laura?

DON GONZALO. Why, my cousin never forgot her for one instant.

DOÑA LAURA. How do you account, then, for his conduct?

DON GONZALO. I will explain. The young man first took refuge in my house, fearful of the consequences of his duel with that man, so much beloved in that locality. From my home he went to Seville, then came to Madrid. He wrote to Laura many letters, some in verse. But, undoubtedly, they were intercepted by her parents, for she never answered them. Gonzalo then, in despair, and believing his loved one lost to him forever, joined the army, went to Africa, and there, in a trench, met a glorious death, grasping the flag of Spain and repeating the name of his beloved — Laura — Laura — Laura.

DOÑA LAURA [*aside*]. What an atrocious lie!

DON GONZALO [*aside*]. I could not have killed myself in a more glorious manner.

DOÑA LAURA. Such a calamity must have caused you the greatest sorrow.

DON GONZALO. Yes, indeed, Señora. As great as if it were a brother. I presume though, that on the contrary, Laura in a short time was chasing butterflies in her garden, indifferent to everything.

DOÑA LAURA. No, Señor, no indeed.

DON GONZALO. It is usually a woman's way.

DOÑA LAURA. Even if you consider it a woman's way, the "Silver Maiden" was not of that disposition. My friend awaited news for days, months, a year, and no letter

came. One afternoon, just at sunset, and as the first stars were appearing, she was seen to leave the house, and with quick steps, wend her way toward the beach, that beach where her beloved had risked his life. She wrote his name on the sand, then sat upon a rock, her gaze fixed upon the horizon. The waves murmured their eternal monologue and slowly covered the rock where the maiden sat. Shall I tell you the rest? — The tide rose and carried her off to sea.

DON GONZALO. Good heavens!

DOÑA LAURA. The fishermen of that sea-coast who tell the story, affirm that it was a long time before the waves washed away that name written on the sand. [*Aside.*] You will not get ahead of me in inventing a romantic death.

DON GONZALO [*aside*]. She lies more than I do.

DOÑA LAURA. Poor Laura!

DON GONZALO. Poor Gonzalo!

DOÑA LAURA [*aside*]. I will not tell him that in two years I married another.

DON GONZALO [*aside*]. I will not tell her that in three months I went to Paris with a ballet dancer.

DOÑA LAURA. What strange pranks Fate plays! Here you and I, complete strangers, met by chance, and in discussing the romance of friends of long ago, we have been conversing as we were old friends.

DON GONZALO. Yes, it is strange, considering we commenced our conversation quarreling.

DOÑA LAURA. Because you scared away the birds.

DON GONZALO. I was in a bad temper.

DOÑA LAURA. Yes, that was evident. [*Sweetly.*] Are you coming to-morrow?

DON GONZALO. Most certainly, if it is a sunny morning. And not only will I not scare away the birds, but will also bring them bread crumbs.

DOÑA LAURA. Thank you very much. They are very interesting and deserve to be noticed. I wonder where my maid is? [*Doña Laura rises; Don Gonzalo also rises.*] What time can it be? [*Doña Laura walks toward left.*]

DON GONZALO. It is nearly twelve o'clock. Where can that scamp Juanito be? [*Walks toward right.*]

DOÑA LAURA. There she is talking with her guard. [*Signals with her hand for her maid to approach.*]

DON GONZALO [*looking at Laura, whose back is turned. Aside*]. No, no, I will not reveal my identity. I am a grotesque figure now. Better that she recall the gallant horseman who passed daily under her window and tossed her flowers.

DOÑA LAURA. How reluctant she is to leave him. Here she comes.

DON GONZALO. But where can Juanito be? He has probably forgotten everything in the society of some nursemaid. [*Looks toward right and signals with his hand.*]

DOÑA LAURA [*looking at Gonzalo, whose back is turned. Aside*]. No, I will not tell him I am Laura. I am too sadly altered. It is better he should remember me as the blackeyed girl who tossed him flowers as he passed through the rose path in that garden.

[*Juanito enters by right: Petra by left. She has a bunch of violets in her hand.*]

DOÑA LAURA. Well, Petra, I thought you were never coming.

DON GONZALO. But, Juanito, what delayed you so? It is very late.

PETRA [*handing violets to Doña Laura*]. My lover gave me these violets for you, Señora.

DOÑA LAURA. How very nice of him. Thank him for me. They are very fragrant. [*As she takes the violets from her maid, a few loose ones drop to the ground.*]

DON GONZALO. My dear Señora, this has been a great honor and pleasure.

DOÑA LAURA. And it has also been a pleasure to me.

DON GONZALO. Good-by until to-morrow.

DOÑA LAURA. Until to-morrow.

DON GONZALO. If it is a sunny day.

DOÑA LAURA. If it is a sunny day. Will you go to your bench?

DON GONZALO. No, Señora, I will come to this, if you do not object?

DOÑA LAURA. This bench is at your disposal. [*Both laugh.*]

DON GONZALO. And I will surely bring the bread crumbs, [*Both laugh again.*]

DOÑA LAURA. Until to-morrow.

DON GONZALO. Until to-morrow.

[*Laura walks away on her maid's arm toward right. Gonzalo, before leaving with Juanito, trembling and with a great effort, stoops to pick up the violets Laura dropped. Just then, Laura turns her head and sees him pick up flowers.*]

JUANITO. What are you doing, Señor?

DON GONZALO. Wait, Juanito, wait.

DOÑA LAURA [*aside*]. There is no doubt. It is he.

DON GONZALO [*walks toward left. Aside*]. There can be no mistake. It is she.

[*Doña Laura and Don Gonzalo wave farewells to each other from a distance.*]

DOÑA LAURA. Merciful heavens! This is Gonzalo.

DON GONZALO. And to think that this is Laura!

[*Before disappearing they give one last smiling look at each other.*]

CURTAIN

THE FALCON [1]

By ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

The Count Federigo degli Alberighi.
Filippo, *the Count's foster-brother.*
The Lady Giovanna.
Elisabetta, *the Count's nurse.*

Scene: *An Italian cottage, castle and mountains seen through a window.*

Elisabetta discovered seated on stool in window, darning. The Count with Falcon on his hand comes down through the door at back. A withered wreath hangs on the wall.

ELISABETTA. So, my lord, the Lady Giovanna, who hath been away so long, came back last night with her son to the castle.

COUNT. Hear that, my bird! Art thou not jealous of her?

My princess of the cloud, my plumed purveyor,
My far-eyed queen of the winds — thou that canst soar
Beyond the morning lark, and, howsoe'er
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop down upon him
Eagle-like, lightning-like — strike, make his feathers
Glance in mid heaven. [*Crosses to chair.*]
I would thou hadst a mate!
Thy breed will die with thee, and mine with me;

[1] The story, which the poet took from Boccaccio (*Decameron*, 5th Day, 9th tale), has been traced to the Sanskrit *Panchatantra*. La Fontaine gives it in his *Contes et Nouvelles* (*Le Faucon*), and Longfellow in his *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (*The Falcon of Ser Federigo*). Performance of this play is free.

I am as lone and loveless as thyself. [*Sits in chair.*]
Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself — *be* jealous!
Thou shouldst be jealous of her. Tho' I bred thee
The full-train'd marvel of all falconry,
And love thee and thou me, yet if Giovanna
Be here again — No, no! Buss me, my bird!
The stately widow has no heart for me.
Thou art the last friend left me upon earth —
No, no again to that! [*Rises and turns.*]
My good old nurse,
I had forgotten thou wast sitting there.

ELISABETTA. Ay, and forgotten thy foster-brother too.

COUNT. Bird-babble for my falcon! Let it pass.
What art thou doing there?

ELISABETTA. Darning, your lordship.
We cannot flaunt it in new feathers now.
Nay, if we *will* buy diamond necklaces
To please our lady, we must darn, my lord.
This old thing here [*points to necklace round her neck*], they are but blue beads — my Piero,
God rest his honest soul, he bought 'em for me,
Ay, but he knew I meant to marry him.
How couldst thou do it, my son? How couldst thou do it?

COUNT. She saw it at a dance, upon a neck
Less lovely than her own, and long'd for it.

ELISABETTA. She told thee as much?

COUNT. No, no — a friend of hers.

ELISABETTA. Shame on her that she took it at thy hands,
She rich enough to have bought it for herself!

COUNT. She would have robb'd me then of a great pleasure.

ELISABETTA. But hath she yet return'd thy love?

COUNT. Not yet!

ELISABETTA. She should return thy necklace then.

COUNT. Ay, if

She knew the giver; but I bound the seller
To silence, and I left it privily
At Florence, in her palace.

ELISABETTA. And sold thine own
To buy it for her. She not know? She knows
There's none such other —

COUNT. Madman anywhere.
Speak freely, tho' to call a madman mad
Will hardly help to make him sane again.

[*Enter Filippo.*]

FILIPPO. Ah, the women, the women! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here again! you that have the face of an angel and the heart of a — that's too positive! You that have a score of lovers and have not a heart for any of them — that's positive-negative: you that have *not* the head of a toad, and *not* a heart like the jewel in it — that's too negative; you that have a cheek like a peach and a heart like the stone in it — that's positive again — that's better!

ELISABETTA. Sh — sh — Filippo!

FILIPPO [*turns half round*]. Here has our master been a-glorifying and a-velveting and a-silking himself, and a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch her eye for a dozen year, till he has n't an eye left in his own tail to flourish among the peahens, and all along o' you, Monna Giovanna, all along o' you!

ELISABETTA. Sh — sh — Filippo! Can't you hear that you are saying behind his back what you see you are saying afore his face?

COUNT. Let him — he never spares me to my face!

FILIPPO. No, my lord, I never spare your lordship to your lordship's face, nor behind your lordship's back, nor to right, nor to left, nor to round about and back to your lordship's face again, for I'm honest, your lordship.

COUNT. Come, come, Filippo, what is there in the larder?

[*Elisabetta crosses to fireplace and puts on wood.*]

FILIPPO. Shelves and hooks, shelves and hooks, and when I see the shelves I am like to hang myself on the hooks.

COUNT. No bread?

FILIPPO. Half a breakfast for a rat!

COUNT. Milk?

FILIPPO. Three laps for a cat!

COUNT. Cheese?

FILIPPO. A supper for twelve mites.

COUNT. Eggs?

FILIPPO. One, but addled.

COUNT. No bird?

FILIPPO. Half a tit and a hern's bill.

COUNT. Let be thy jokes and thy jerks, man! Anything or nothing?

FILIPPO. Well, my lord, if all-but-nothing be anything, and one plate of dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then there is anything in your lordship's larder at your lordship's service, if your lordship care to call for it.

COUNT. Good mother, happy was the prodigal son.
For he return'd to the rich father; I
But add my poverty to thine. And all
Thro' following of my fancy. Pray thee make
Thy slender meal out of those scraps and shreds
Filippo spoke of. As for him and me,
There sprouts a salad in the garden still.
[*To the Falcon.*] Why didst thou miss thy quarry yester-even?
To-day, my beauty, thou must dash us down
Our dinner from the skies. Away, Filippo!

[*Exit, followed by Filippo.*]

ELISABETTA. I knew it would come to this. She has beggared him. I always knew it would come to this!

[*Goes up to table as if to resume darning, and looks out of window.*] Why, as I live, there is Monna Giovanna coming down the hill from the castle. Stops and stares at our cottage. Ay, ay! stare at it: it's all you have left us. Shame on you! *She* beautiful! sleek as a miller's mouse! Meal enough, meat enough, well fed; but beautiful — bah! Nay, see, why, she turns down the path through our little vineyard, and I sneezed three times this morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in her life, too! Why, bless the saints! I'll be bound to confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this — I always knew it must come to this! [*Goes up to door during latter part of speech, and opens it.*] Come in, madonna, come in. [*Retires to front of table and curtseys as the Lady Giovanna enters, then moves chair toward the hearth.* Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship.

[*Lady Giovanna moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.*]

LADY GIOVANNA. Can I speak with the Count?

ELISABETTA. Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly — which is more than I did, my lady, more than I did — and he so handsome — and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self — and better late than never — but come when they will — then or now— it's all for the best, come when they will — they are made by the blessed saints — these marriages. [*Raises her hands.*]

LADY GIOVANNA. Marriages? I shall never marry again!

ELISABETTA [*rises and turns*]. Shame on her then!
LADY GIOVANNA. Where is the Count?
ELISABETTA. Just gone
To fly his falcon.
LADY GIOVANNA. Call him back and say
I come to breakfast with him.
ELISABETTA. Holy mother!
To breakfast! O sweet saints! one plate of prunes!
Well, madam, I will give your message to him. [*Exit.*]
LADY GIOVANNA. His falcon, and I come to ask for his falcon,
The pleasure of his eyes — boast of his hand —
Pride of his heart — the solace of his hours —
His one companion here — nay, I have heard
That thro' his late magnificence of living
And this last costly gift to mine own self,
[*Shows diamond necklace.*]
He hath become so beggar'd that his falcon
Even wins his dinner for him in the field.
That must be talk, not truth, but, truth or talk,
How can I ask for his falcon?
[*Rises and moves as she speaks.*]
O my sick boy!
My daily fading Florio, it is thou
Hath set me this hard task, for when I say,
What can I do — what can I get for thee?
He answers, "Get the Count to give me his falcon,
And that will make me well." Yet if I ask,
He loves me, and he knows I know he loves me!
Will he not pray me to return his love —
To marry him? — [*pause*] — I can never marry him.
His grandsire struck my grandsire in a brawl
At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd him there.
The feud between our houses is the bar
I cannot cross; I dare not brave my brother,

Break with my kin. My brother hates him, scorns
The noblest-natured man alive, and I
Who have that reverence for him that I scarce
Dare beg him to receive his diamonds back —
How can I, dare I, ask for his falcon?
[*Puts diamonds in her casket.*]

[*Re-enter Count and Filippo. Count turns to Filippo.*]

COUNT. Do what I said; I cannot do it myself.
FILIPPO. Why then, my lord, we are pauper'd out and out.
COUNT. Do what I said! [*Advances and bows low.*]
Welcome to this poor cottage, my dear lady.
LADY GIOVANNA. And welcome turns a cottage to a palace.
COUNT. 'T is long since we have met!
LADY GIOVANNA. To make amends
I come this day to break my fast with you.
COUNT. I am much honor'd — yes — [*Turns to Filippo.*]
Do what I told thee. Must I do it myself?
FILIPPO. I will, I will. [*Sighs.*] Poor fellow! [*Exit.*]
COUNT. Lady, you bring your light into my cottage
Who never deign'd to shine into my palace.
My palace wanting you was but a cottage;
My cottage, while you grace it, is a palace.
LADY GIOVANNA. In cottage or in palace, being still
Beyond your fortunes, you are still the king
Of courtesy and liberality.
COUNT. I trust I still maintain my courtesy;
My liberality perforce is dead
Thro' lack of means of giving.
LADY GIOVANNA. Yet I come
To ask a gift. [*Moves toward him a little.*]
COUNT. It will be hard, I fear,
To find one shock upon the field when all
The harvest has been carried.

LADY GIOVANNA. But my boy —

[*Aside.*] No, no! not yet — I cannot!

COUNT. Ay, how is he,
That bright inheritor of your eyes — your boy?

LADY GIOVANNA. Alas, my Lord Federigo, he hath fallen
Into a sickness, and it troubles me.

COUNT. Sick! is it so? why, when he came last year
To see me hawking, he was well enough;
And then I taught him all our hawking-phrases.

LADY GIOVANNA. O yes, and once you let him fly your falcon.

COUNT. How charm'd he was! what wonder? — A gallant boy,
A noble bird, each perfect of the breed:

LADY GIOVANNA [*sinks in chair*]. What do you rate her at?

COUNT. My bird? a hundred
Gold pieces once were offered by the Duke.
I had no heart to part with her for money.

LADY GIOVANNA. No, not for money.
[*Count turns away and sighs.*]
Wherefore do you sigh?

COUNT. I have lost a friend of late.

LADY GIOVANNA. I could sigh with you
For fear of losing more than friend, a son;
And if he leave me — all the rest of life —
That wither'd wreath were of more worth to me.
[*Looking at wreath on wall.*]

COUNT. That wither'd wreath is of more worth to me
Than all the blossom, all the leaf of this
New-wakening year. [*Goes and takes down wreath.*]

LADY GIOVANNA. And yet I never saw
The land so rich in blossom as this year.

COUNT [*holding wreath toward her*]. Was not the year when this was gather'd richer?

LADY GIOVANNA. How long ago was that?

COUNT. Alas, ten summers!
A lady that was beautiful as day
Sat by me at a rustic festival
With other beauties on a mountain meadow,
And she was the most beautiful of all;
Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.
The mountain flowers grew thickly round about.
I made a wreath with some of these; I ask'd
A ribbon from her hair to bind it with;
I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen of Beauty,
And softly placed the chaplet on her head,
A color, which has color'd all my life,
Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd away;
And presently all rose, and so departed.
Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on the grass,
And there I found it.

[*Lets his hands fall, holding wreath despondingly.*]

LADY GIOVANNA [*after pause*]. How long since do you say?

COUNT. That was the very year before you married.

LADY GIOVANNA. When I was married you were at the wars.

COUNT. Had she not thrown my chaplet on the grass,
It may be I had never seen the wars.

[*Replaces wreath whence he had taken it.*]

LADY GIOVANNA. Ah, but, my lord, there ran a rumor then
That you were kill'd in battle. I can tell you
True tears that year were shed for you in Florence.

COUNT. It might have been as well for me. Unhappily
I was but wounded by the enemy there
And then imprison'd.

LADY GIOVANNA. Happily, however,
I see you quite recover'd of your wound.

COUNT. No, no, not quite, madonna, not yet, not yet.

[*Re-enter Filippo.*]

FILIPPO. My lord, a word with you.

COUNT. Pray, pardon me!

[*Lady Giovanna crosses, and passes behind chair and takes down wreath; then goes to chair by table.*]

COUNT [*to Filippo*]. What is it, Filippo?

FILIPPO. Spoons, your lordship.

COUNT. Spoons!

FILIPPO. Yes, my lord, for was n't my lady born with a golden spoon in her ladyship's mouth, and we have n't never so much as a silver one for the golden lips of her ladyship.

COUNT. Have we not half a score of silver spoons?

FILIPPO. Half o' one, my lord!

COUNT. How half of one?

FILIPPO. I trod upon him even now, my lord, in my hurry, and broke him.

COUNT. And the other nine?

FILIPPO. Sold! but shall I not mount with your lordship's leave to her ladyship's castle, in your lordship's and her ladyship's name, and confer with her ladyship's seneschal, and so descend again with some of her ladyship's own appurtenances?

COUNT. Why — no, man. Only see your cloth be clean.

[*Exit Filippo.*]

LADY GIOVANNA. Ay, ay, this faded ribbon was the mode
In Florence ten years back. What's here? a scroll
Pinned to the wreath.
My lord, you have said so much
Of this poor wreath that I was bold enough
To take it down, if but to guess what flowers
Had made it; and I find a written scroll
That seems to run in rhymings. Might I read?

COUNT. Ay, if you will.

LADY GIOVANNA. It should be if you can.

[*Reads.*] "Dead mountain." Nay, for who could trace
a hand
So wild and staggering?

COUNT. This was penn'd, madonna,
Close to the grating on a winter morn
In the perpetual twilight of a prison,
When he that made it, having his right hand
Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his left.

LADY GIOVANNA. O heavens! the very letters seem to
shake
With cold, with pain perhaps, poor prisoner! Well,
Tell me the words — or better — for I see
There goes a musical score along with them,
Repeat them to their music.

COUNT. You can touch
No chord in me that would not answer you
In music.

LADY GIOVANNA. That is musically said.

[*Count takes guitar. Lady Giovanna sits listening with wreath in her hand, and quietly removes scroll and places it on table at the end of the song.*]

COUNT [*sings, playing guitar*]. "Dead mountain flowers,
dead mountain-meadow flowers,
Dearer than when you made your mountain gay,
Sweeter than any violet of to-day,
Richer than all the wide world-wealth of May,
To me, tho' all your bloom has died away,
You bloom again, dead mountain-meadow flowers."

[*Enter Elisabetta with cloth.*]

ELISABETTA. A word with you, my lord!

COUNT [*singing*]. "O mountain flowers!"

ELISABETTA [*louder*]. A word, my lord!

COUNT [*sings*]. "Dead flowers!"

ELISABETTA [*louder*]. A word, my lord!

COUNT. I pray you pardon me again!

[*Lady Giovanna looking at wreath.*]

COUNT [*to Elisabetta*]. What is it?

ELISABETTA. My lord, we have but one piece of earthenware to serve the salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

COUNT. Why then, that flower'd bowl my ancestor
Fetch'd from the farthest east — we never use it
For fear of breakage — but this day has brought
A great occasion. You can take it, nurse!

ELISABETTA. I did take it, my lord, but what with my lady's coming that had so flurried me, and what with the fear of breaking it, I did break it, my lord; it is broken!

COUNT. My one thing left of value in the world!
No matter! see your cloth be white as snow!

ELISABETTA [*pointing thro' window*]. White? I warrant thee, my son, as the snow yonder on the very tip-top o' the mountain.

COUNT. And yet, to speak white truth, my good old mother,
I have seen it like the snow on the moraine.

ELISABETTA. How can your lordship say so? There, my lord! [*Lays cloth.*]
O my dear son, be not unkind to me.
And one word more. [*Going — returns.*]

COUNT [*touching guitar*]. Good! let it be but one.

ELISABETTA. Hath she return'd thy love?

COUNT. Not yet!

ELISABETTA. And will she?

COUNT [*looking at Lady Giovanna*]. I scarce believe it!

ELISABETTA. Shame upon her then! [*Exit.*]

COUNT [*sings*]. "Dead mountain flowers" —
Ah well, my nurse has broken

The thread of my dead flowers, as she has broken
My china bowl. My memory is as dead.

[*Goes and replaces guitar.*]

Strange that the words at home with me so long
Should fly like bosom friends when needed most.
So by your leave, if you would hear the rest,
The writing.

LADY GIOVANNA [*holding wreath toward him*]. There! my lord, you are a poet,
And can you not imagine that the wreath,
Set, as you say, so lightly on her head,
Fell with her motion as she rose, and she,
A girl, a child, then but fifteen, however
Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice of her,
Was yet too bashful to return for it?

COUNT. Was it so indeed? was it so? was it so?

[*Leans forward to take wreath, and touches Lady Giovanna's hand, which she withdraws hastily; he places wreath on corner of chair.*]

LADY GIOVANNA [*with dignity*]. I did not say, my lord, that it was so;
I said you might imagine it was so.

[*Enter Filippo with bowl of salad, which he places on table.*]

FILIPPO. Here 's a fine salad for my lady, for tho' we have been a soldier, and ridden by his lordship's side, and seen the red of the battle-field, yet are we now drill-sergeant to his lordship's lettuces, and profess to be great in green things and in garden-stuff.

LADY GIOVANNA. I thank thee, good Filippo.

[*Exit Filippo.*]

[*Enter Elisabetta with bird on a dish which she places on table.*]

ELISABETTA [*close to table*]. Here 's a fine fowl for my lady;

I had scant time to do him in. I hope he be not underdone, for we be undone in the doing of him.

LADY GIOVANNA. I thank you, my good nurse.

FILIPPO [*re-entering with plate of prunes*]. And here are fine fruits for my lady — prunes, my lady, from the tree that my lord himself planted here in the blossom of his boyhood — and so I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's pardon, and as your ladyship knows, his lordship's own foster-brother, would commend them to your ladyship's most peculiar appreciation. [*Puts plate on table.*]

ELISABETTA. Filippo!

LADY GIOVANNA [*Count leads her to table*]. Will you not eat with me, my lord?

COUNT. I cannot;
Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have broken
My fast already. I will pledge you. Wine!
Filippo, wine!

[*Sits near table; Filippo brings flask, fills the Count's goblet, then Lady Giovanna's; Elisabetta stands at the back of Lady Giovanna's chair.*]

COUNT. It is but thin and cold,
Not like the vintage blowing round your castle.
We lie too deep down in the shadow here.
Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[*They pledge each other and drink.*]

LADY GIOVANNA. If I might send you down a flask or two
Of that same vintage? There is iron in it.
It has been much commended as a medicine.
I give it my sick son, and if you be
Not quite recover'd of your wound, the wine
Might help you. None has ever told me yet
The story of your battle and your wound.

FILIPPO [*coming forward*]. I can tell you, my lady, I can tell you.

ELISABETTA. Filippo! will you take the word out of your master's own mouth?

FILIPPO. Was it there to take? Put it there, my lord.
COUNT. Giovanna, my dear lady, in this same battle
We had been beaten — they were ten to one.
The trumpets of the fight had echo'd down,
I and Filippo here had done our best,
And, having passed unwounded from the field,
Were seated sadly at a fountain side,
Our horses grazing by us, when a troop,
Laden with booty and with a flag of ours
Ta'en in the fight —
FILIPPO. Ay, but we fought for it back,
And kill'd —
ELISABETTA. Filippo!
COUNT. A troop of horse —
FILIPPO. Five hundred!
COUNT. Say fifty!
FILIPPO. And we kill'd 'em by the score!
ELISABETTA. Filippo!
FILIPPO. Well, well, well! I bite my tongue.
COUNT. We may have left their fifty less by five.
However, staying not to count how many,
But anger'd at their flaunting of our flag,
We mounted, and we dash'd into the heart of 'em.
I wore the lady's chaplet round my neck;
It served me for a blessed rosary.
I am sure that more than one brave fellow owed
His death to the charm in it.
ELISABETTA. Hear that, my lady!
COUNT. I cannot tell how long we strove before
Our horses fell beneath us; down we went
Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled underfoot.
The night,
As some cold-manner'd friend may strangely do us
The truest service, had a touch of frost
That help'd to check the flowing of the blood.

My last sight ere I swoon'd was one sweet face
Crown'd with the wreath. *That* seem'd to come and go.
They left us there for dead!

ELISABETTA. Hear that, my lady!

FILIPPO. Ay, and I left two fingers there for dead. See, my lady! [*Showing his hand.*]

LADY GIOVANNA. I see, Filippo!

FILIPPO. And I have small hope of the gentleman gout in my great toe.

LADY GIOVANNA. And why, Filippo? [*Smiling absently.*]

FILIPPO. I left him there for dead too.

ELISABETTA. She smiles at him — how hard the woman is!
My lady, if your ladyship were not
Too proud to look upon the garland, you
Would find it stain'd —

COUNT [*rising*]. Silence, Elisabetta!

ELISABETTA. Stain'd with the blood of the best heart that ever
Beat for one woman. [*Points to wreath on chair.*]

LADY GIOVANNA [*rising slowly*]. I can eat no more!

COUNT. You have but trifled with our homely salad,
But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf;
Not eaten anything.

LADY GIOVANNA. Nay, nay, I cannot.
You know, my lord, I told you I was troubled.
My one child Florio lying still so sick,
I bound myself, and by a solemn vow,
That I would touch no flesh till he were well
Here, or else well in heaven, where all is well.

[*Elisabetta clears table of bird and salad: Filippo snatches up the plate of prunes and holds them to Lady Giovanna.*]

FILIPPO. But the prunes, my lady, from the tree that his lordship —

LADY GIOVANNA. Not now, Filippo. My lord Federigo,
Can I not speak with you once more alone?

COUNT. You hear, Filippo? My good fellow, go.
FILIPPO. But the prunes that your lordship —
ELISABETTA. Filippo!
COUNT. Ay, prune our company of thine own, and go!
ELISABETTA. Filippo!
FILIPPO [*turning*]. Well, well! the women! [*Exit.*]
COUNT. And thou too leave us, my dear nurse, alone.
ELISABETTA [*folding up cloth and going*]. And me too! Ay, the dear nurse will leave you alone; but, for all that, she that has eaten the yolk is scarce like to swallow the shell.

[*Turns and curtseys stiffly to Lady Giovanna, then exit. Lady Giovanna takes out diamond necklace from casket.*]

LADY GIOVANNA. I have anger'd your good nurse; these old-world servants
Are all but flesh and blood with those they serve.
My lord, I have a present to return you,
And afterwards a boon to crave of you.
COUNT. No, my most honor'd and long-worshipt lady,
Poor Federigo degli Alberighi
Takes nothing in return from you except
Return of his affection — can deny
Nothing to you that you require of him.
LADY GIOVANNA. Then I require you to take back your diamonds — [*Offering necklace.*]
I doubt not they are yours. No other heart
Of such magnificence in courtesy
Beats — out of heaven. They seem'd too rich a prize
To trust with any messenger. I came
In person to return them. [*Count draws back.*]
If the phrase
"Return" displease you, we will say — exchange them.
For your — for your —
COUNT [*takes a step toward her and then back*]. For mine — and what of mine?

LADY GIOVANNA. Well, shall we say this wreath and your sweet rhymes?

COUNT. But have you ever worn my diamonds?

LADY GIOVANNA. No!
For that would seem accepting of your love.
I cannot brave my brother — but be sure
That I shall never marry again, my lord!

COUNT. Sure?

LADY GIOVANNA. Yes!

COUNT. Is this your brother's order?

LADY GIOVANNA. No!
For he would marry me to the richest man
In Florence; but I think you know the saying —
"Better a man without riches, than riches without a man."

COUNT. A noble saying — and acted on would yield
A nobler breed of men and women. Lady,
I find you a shrewd bargainer. The wreath
That once you wore outvalues twenty-fold
The diamonds that you never deign'd to wear.
But lay them there for a moment!

[*Points to table. Lady Giovanna places necklace on table.*]

And be you
Gracious enough to let me know the boon
By granting which, if aught be mine to grant,
I should be made more happy than I hoped
Ever to be again.

LADY GIOVANNA. Then keep your wreath,
But you will find me a shrewd bargainer still.
I cannot keep your diamonds, for the gift
I ask for, to *my* mind and at this present
Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.

COUNT. It should be love that thus outvalues all.
You speak like love, and yet you love me not.
I have nothing in this world but love for you.

LADY GIOVANNA. Love? it *is* love, love for my dying boy,
Moves me to ask it of you.
COUNT. What? my time?
Is it my time? Well, I can give my time
To him that is a part of you, your son.
Shall I return to the castle with you? Shall I
Sit by him, read to him, tell him my tales,
Sing him my songs? You know that I can touch
The gittern to some purpose.
LADY GIOVANNA. No, not that!
I thank you heartily for that — and you,
I doubt not from your nobleness of nature,
Will pardon me for asking what I ask.
COUNT. Giovanna, dear Giovanna, I that once
The wildest of the random youth of Florence
Before I saw you — all my nobleness
Of nature, as you deign to call it, draws
From you, and from my constancy to you.
No more, but speak.
LADY GIOVANNA. I will. You know sick people,
More specially sick children, have strange fancies,
Strange longings; and to thwart them in their mood
May work them grievous harm at times, may even
Hasten their end. I would you had a son!
It might be easier for you to make
Allowance for a mother — her — who comes
To rob you of your one delight on earth.
How often has my sick boy yearn'd for this!
I have put him off as often; but to-day
I dared not — so much weaker, so much worse
For last day's journey. I was weeping for him;
He gave me his hand: "I should be well again
If the good Count would give me —"
COUNT. Give me —
LADY GIOVANNA. "His falcon."

COUNT [*starts back*]. My falcon!
LADY GIOVANNA. Yes, your falcon, Federigo!
COUNT. Alas, I cannot!
LADY GIOVANNA. Cannot? Even so!
I fear'd as much. O this unhappy world!
How shall I break it to him? how shall I tell him?
The boy may die; more blessed were the rags
Of some pale beggar-woman seeking alms
For her sick son, if he were like to live,
Than all my childless wealth, if mine must die.
I was to blame — the love you said you bore me —
My lord, we thank you for your entertainment,
[*With a stately curtsey.*]
And so return — Heaven help him! — to our son.
[*Turns.*]
COUNT [*rushes forward*]. Stay, stay, I am most unlucky, most unhappy!
You never had look'd in on me before,
And when you came and dipt your sovereign head
Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to eat with me.
I had but emptiness to set before you,
No, not a draught of milk, no, not an egg,
Nothing but my brave bird, my noble falcon,
My comrade of the house, and of the field.
She had to die for it — she died for you.
Perhaps I thought with those of old, the nobler
The victim was, the more acceptable
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you scarce
Will thank me for your entertainment now.
LADY GIOVANNA [*returning*]. I bear with him no longer.
COUNT. No, madonna!
And he will have to bear with it as he may.
LADY GIOVANNA. I break with him for ever!
COUNT. Yes, Giovanna,
But he will keep his love to you for ever!

LADY GIOVANNA. You? you? not you!
My brother! my hard brother!
O Federigo, Federigo, I love you!
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Federigo!
[*Falls at his feet.*]

COUNT [*impetuously*]. Why, then the dying of my noble bird
Hath served me better than her living — then
[*Takes diamonds from table.*]
These diamonds are both yours and mine — have won
Their value again — beyond all markets — there,
I lay them for the first time round your neck.
[*Lays necklace round her neck.*]
And then this chaplet — No more feuds, but peace,
Peace and conciliation! I will make
Your brother love me. See, I tear away
The leaves were darken'd by the battle —
[*Pulls leaves off and throws them down.*]
— crown you
Again with the same crown my Queen of Beauty.
[*Places wreath on her head.*]
Rise — I could almost think that the dread garland
Will break once more into the living blossom.
Nay, nay, I pray you rise.
[*Raises her with both hands.*]
We two together
Will help to heal your son — your son and mine —
We shall do it — we shall do it! [*Embraces her.*]
The purpose of my being is accomplish'd,
And I am happy!

LADY GIOVANNA. And I too, Federigo.

CURTAIN

THE COMING OF FAIR ANNIE[1]

A Play based upon the Old Ballad "Love Gregor"

By GRAHAM PRICE

CHARACTERS

Love Gregor, *a poet. Chief of the Clan Gregor.*
Lady Gregor, *his mother.*
Fair Annie, *his young wife.*
Donald, *an old retainer of the Gregor Family.*

Scene: *The Hall of Castle Gregor. A large open door at the back of the stage reveals a pathway edged with briar-roses leading down to the sea. The rose-bushes are bright with the tender, delicate blossoms of autumn. Beyond the rose-garden, one catches a glimpse of the water of Loch Gregor shut in by high and rocky mountains. The setting sun casts a crimson glow upon these heights and turns to gold the edges of a great cloud that hangs over the waters.*

At rise of curtain, Lady Gregor discovered reading. Now and then she raises her head to listen impatiently to her son who is singing in the garden. Towards the end of his song she closes her book and goes to the great door.

LOVE GREGOR [*singing outside*].

Oh, cherry, cherry is her cheek;
Her hair like summer corn;
Her lips like poppies flaming red
That summer fields adorn.

[1] Reprinted by special arrangement with Gowans and Gray, Ltd., London and Glasgow, and their American agent, LeRoy Phillips, Boston. Inquiries regarding the acting rights may be addressed to H. H. Webster, 2 Park Street, Boston.

Her eyes are like a summer sea,
Of waters still and deep;
Or like the light that floods the sky
When the sun begins to peep.

Oh, how I long to see my dear!
I long to kiss my love!
With her face like the face of a sweet angel
And her heart like the heart of a dove.

LADY GREGOR [*at the great door*]. All day he sings of her! No thoughts he gives to me save those of hard remembered duty and respect.

[*Enter Donald with a letter.*]

DONALD. Another letter for my lord.

LADY GREGOR. Comes it from Castle Ryan — from the Lady Annie?

DONALD. It does, my lady.

LADY GREGOR. Open it! [*Donald hesitates.*] Fear not to do my bidding. I am still mistress here at Castle Gregor. [*Donald opens the letter.*] How writes the Lady Annie?

DONALD [*reading*]. "Day after day passes and still no tidings of my belovèd one. My heart is weighed down with fears, and my eyes are weary watching for my husband's messenger. Oh, wherefore is this long, long silence? Is my lord sick? or does his lady mother linger still upon the borderland of life, holding him captive to her chamber? In my father's house the services of love are sweetly rendered both to me and to my son, yet here I cannot stay, for if my lord come not to me then I must come to him. My father, at my importunity, hath loaned to me a gallant ship and mariners to guide her through the perils of the sea. In the early coldness of to-morrow's dawn we shall set forth to seek the castle

of my lord. Oh, may God bring us safely to the home of Love Gregor, the home of my dear husband — O my sweet! Annie."

LADY GREGOR. She comes to Castle Gregor — foolish girl! 'T is rash to face the perils of the autumn sea, but rasher still to face the perils of my hate.

DONALD. Hate, my lady? Why should your displeasure fall upon my master's bride? Report speaks well of her. They say that she is wondrous wise.

LADY GREGOR. Wisdom indeed is hers! Has she not stolen from me by her crafts the love of my dear son?

DONALD. Not by her crafts, my lady. It was her beauty that won my master's heart. Each day he sings the glory of her golden hair, the radiance of her blue, blue eyes.

LADY GREGOR. Are not the daughters of Evil adorned with beauty? Do they not draw men to destruction by the brightness of their eyes? Are not the souls of their lovers oft enmeshed in the nets of their shining hair?

DONALD. But the Lady Annie is no daughter of Evil. My master speaks ever of her goodness — he maketh songs in praise of the whiteness of her soul.

LADY GREGOR. Your master is sick with love, and when lovesickness lies upon a man he sees with a charmèd vision. Evil seems good; and things vile and common take unto themselves the semblance of beauty. [*Love Gregor sings.*] Hark! That song again! 'T is always of her he sings, always of her!

LOVE GREGOR [*singing outside*].

Her voice is like a mountain brook
That sings as it speeds along;
The rapture of her happy laugh
Is like to the lilt of a song.

LADY GREGOR. Tell me, Donald, have you not heard of

those that sway the human heart by favour of God's adversary?

DONALD. I have, my lady — and well I know the souls of noble men have oft been lost by reason of the traffickers of Evil.

LADY GREGOR. God save your master from such evil practisings.

DONALD. Ah, Sweet Jesus shield him, for I do love him better than anything on earth.

LADY GREGOR. The time is at hand when you may prove the worth of this your love.

DONALD. What means your ladyship?

LADY GREGOR. The Lady Annie comes to Castle Gregor. We must watch for her coming! We must send her away! We must shield Love Gregor from the nets of her enchantment.

DONALD. Think you the Lady Annie hath cast a glamour o'er my master?

LADY GREGOR. How else should he be so distraught? Doth he not walk the earth like one whose spirit is uplifted by some strange ecstasy?

DONALD. He doth indeed! And yet I scarce can credit such evil of his lordship's bride, for she is a lady of noble race. Her kin hath brought to Scotland both honour and renown.

LADY GREGOR. There is no race so noble but at times 't will breed both knaves and fools. Even the Lady Annie's father himself hath been suspected of communing with the Evil One.

DONALD. Is that so, my lady?

LADY GREGOR. 'T is said that by controlment of the winds and waves, the Lord of Ryan draws the heavy-laden galleons of Spain into the perils of his rock-bound home. Night after night his men are seen wandering upon Loch Ryan's shore, casting their torches' flare upon the shal-

low water, and gathering up the treasures brought unto land by the enchantments of their lord.

DONALD. The Lord of Ryan must have great riches!

LADY GREGOR. Riches, indeed! The cellars of his castle are filled with Spanish gold and in the caves that run beneath them to the sea there is merchandise of untold worth.

DONALD. May God have mercy on this Lord of Ryan, for wealth won wrongly weighs the soul to earth so that it may not wing its way to Heaven.

LADY GREGOR. Pray rather for the souls of those that stand in peril of his wicked spells. Ask the good God to shield your master from the enchantments of his daughter — the wise and beautiful Lady Annie.

DONALD. Is it for my master's salvation that you would turn away the Lady Annie from our door?

LADY GREGOR. 'T is for the health of his soul. Was it not to save him from the Lady Annie's evil charms that I drew him to Castle Gregor by a feignèd sickness? That I waylaid the messengers that would have passed betwixt him and this enchantress ! — that I sought to sow within his mind the seeds of distrust? Oh, Donald, give me your aid this night and we will draw apart these love-entangled souls, for should my son not see Fair Annie for awhile her image must fade a little from his mind. Then might he turn to me — to me, the mother, waiting at his side — and know at last the richness of that love that I do bear for him.

LOVE GREGOR [*singing outside*].

Oh, how I long to see my dear!
I long to kiss my love!
With her face like the face of a sweet angel
And her heart like the heart of a dove!

DONALD. My master is coming in from the garden.

LADY GREGOR. Give me Fair Annie's letter; I will hide it

within the leaves of God's Book. [*She hides the letter.*]

[*Enter Love Gregor from the garden.*]

You are early in to-night.

LOVE GREGOR. The shadows fall upon the garden and night comes before its time. I fear there will be rain ere long. Look how the glory of the sun's farewell is dimmed by the gathering of clouds! The far-off hills, so darkly outlined 'gainst the evening sky, seem almost at hand.

DONALD. There will come a storm with the falling of the night.

LOVE GREGOR [*to Donald*]. Has no letter arrived from the Lady Annie?

DONALD [*hesitatingly*]. None — my lord — that I know of —

LOVE GREGOR. 'T is strange! I cannot understand this long, long silence. Tell the porter at the gate to keep his watch throughout the night. If any messenger should come from Castle Ryan he must bring me word at once.

DONALD. I will tell him, my lord. [*Exit Donald.*]

LADY GREGOR. Why do you fret the house with this perpetual watching?

LOVE GREGOR. My mind is troubled with surmise. I fear my wife is sick! I fear some evil hath fallen on our little one! Oh, for one message of love! A few short words to bring back peace into my life!

LADY GREGOR. Sweep all these idle fancies from your mind. Your wife is but a child. How could her thoughts dwell with her absent lord amid the revelry of Castle Ryan?

LOVE GREGOR. What mean you, my lady mother?

LADY GREGOR. Have you not told me of that brightly-coloured round of pleasure that makes perpetual movement at Fair Annie's home? The cries of the tourney and the chase that fill its policies each day with joyful sounds. Are not the lighted windows of Great Ryan's

keep seen twinkling every night — like a hundred merry eyes — by mariners far out at sea? — while snatches of gay music float across the moving waters and cheer the hearts of those who keep their watches on the passing ships? Fair Annie is young — the mind of Youth turns easily to the pleasures of the hour.

LOVE GREGOR. But not the mind of Annie, for though she has a merry heart, and dearly loves to sing and dance, she never was a slave to pleasure.

LADY GREGOR. You speak as though Fair Annie were the paragon of wives.

LOVE GREGOR. And so she is! I do believe she is the fairest flower that God has ever sent to adorn His earthly garden!

LADY GREGOR. In the early days of marriage all men think their wives uncommon, but 't is a foolish thought!

LOVE GREGOR. Oh, mother, mother! Why do you search your mind to find some flaw in Annie's love for me? Why has your speech become of late so harsh and cruel?

LADY GREGOR. Never have I been harsh to you, Love Gregor.

LOVE GREGOR. Perchance not to me, but better could I bear a harshness to myself than to the woman that I love. If you cannot speak of Annie with more gentleness — then speak of her not at all.

LADY GREGOR. Nay, be not angry, Love Gregor. It is your mother's love that sometimes makes her speak thus bitterly.

LOVE GREGOR. Strange is the love that hath such power to wound. Your words are like daggers, each one stabbing my heart.

LADY GREGOR. Forgive me, Lord Gregor. Oh, my son, you know not the love-hunger that gnaws at the heart of a mother — a mother who has waited at Love's feast

and through the long and weary years has been passed by. You must forgive, Love Gregor.

[*Enter Donald hurriedly.*]

DONALD. My lady! My lady!

[*He sees Love Gregor and hesitates.*]

LOVE GREGOR. Have you any news?

DONALD. Nay, nay, nothing, my lord!

LOVE GREGOR. Why, then, this haste?

DONALD. I have a message for my lady, but 't is nothing — nothing of importance.

LADY GREGOR. Go to your couch, my son, this watching hath made you restless. Shut fast the great door, Donald.

LOVE GREGOR. Nay! Let me enjoy the last sweet mysteries of the falling night. The shadows in the garden grow dark and darker. A watery mist gives to the distant hills the soft grey beauty of the peaks of fairyland.

LADY GREGOR. Shut the door, my son! The wind blows cold.

LOVE GREGOR. 'T is cold indeed! Look how it hath scattered the rose-leaves o'er the moss-edged flags, decking the pathway with their fragrant beauty, as though to greet the coming of a bride.

LADY GREGOR. Shut the door, my son! Shut the door! The clammy mists of night creep into the house and chill me to the bone.

LOVE GREGOR. Make fast the door, Donald. Good-night, my lady mother. I shall but rest upon my couch, lest some messenger should come from Castle Ryan.

[*He kisses her.*]

LADY GREGOR. Good-night, dear son. Kiss me again, nay, not so coldly. That's better, good-night. May sleep bring calm unto your troubled mind.

[*Exit Love Gregor.*]

DONALD. I am glad that my master has gone, for I have news, my lady.

LADY GREGOR. News? Is it of the Lady Annie?

DONALD. It is, my lady.

LADY GREGOR. Is there word of her coming?

DONALD. Her ship is even now sailing down the Loch.

LADY GREGOR. Have you seen it?

DONALD. Not I, my lady, but the Porter at the gate hath watched it for an hour or so.

LADY GREGOR. How knew he 't was the Lady Annie's ship?

DONALD. By its ebon hull and its red brown sails; by the green coats of its mariners; and by the great black swan that with its ruffled wings and proudly-archèd neck, bends o'er the prow as though to hiss defiance to the waves.

LADY GREGOR. Such are the ships of the Lords of Ryan. To what direction does the vessel shape its course?

DONALD. It comes to Castle Gregor! Upon the deck there stands a lady tall and fair — her eyes are set upon our lofty towers, and ever with her hand she seems to urge the mariners to speed their boat towards our Castle's steps.

LADY GREGOR. Close fast the shutters lest our light should prove a beacon unto them. [*Donald closes the shutters.*] We must be watchful, Donald — we must be wise.

DONALD. Fear falls upon my heart.

LADY GREGOR. This is no time for fear. The safety of your master's soul depends this night on you. If that your love for him hath any worth, now must you prove it and save him from an everlasting death.

DONALD. I love my master better than I love myself, and therefore do I cast away my fears.

LADY GREGOR. Now you are yourself.

DONALD. You may trust me, my lady, for if it be within the power of man, I will save my dear lord.

LADY GREGOR. Bolt fast the door, put up the chains, and turn the key! Never shall Fair Annie's shadow fall upon our Castle's floor — never shall her footstep cross the threshold of our home.

DONALD. The door is fast. How the wind begins to wail!

LADY GREGOR. The storm has come at last.

DONALD. The song of the wind is a sad song —

LADY GREGOR. Wake up, Donald! Wake up! This is no time for fireside sadness! Wake up!

DONALD. What should we do, my lady?

LADY GREGOR. Time and occasion must direct our way; only we must be ready — for the hour of action is at hand. Hark! Was not that the lilt of a song?

DONALD. It was, my lady.

LADY GREGOR. It came from the sea — borne fitfully upon the unequal wind.

DONALD. It must have been the song of mariners.

LADY GREGOR. Go to your master's room; if he be asleep, close fast his door, lest this singing should awaken him.

[*Exit Donald.*]

[*Lady Gregor listens at the great door — the lilt of the song grows clearer. The song of the Mariners is heard outside.*]

MARINERS [*outside*].

Speed on! Speed on! My bonny boat!
Speed on towards the land!
For yonder behold Lord Gregor's towers
Close to the salt sea-strand.

[*During the song reënter Donald.*]

DONALD. My master is asleep.

LADY GREGOR. That 's well. Go to the unlighted window of the passage, and when the ship hath come to land, bring me word. [*Exit Donald.*]

[*Lady Gregor puts out the candle so that the stage is lighted only by the glow of the fire.*]

MARINERS [*outside*].

Make fast, make fast your bonny boat
Beneath the Castle's wall!
Lord Gregor soon shall meet his bride
Within his stately hall.

[*Enter Donald.*]

DONALD. The ship hath come to land. I saw the Lady Annie passing through the water-gate. She bore her young son in her arms, and the heavy splendour of her hair was blown about her by the fitful wind as though it were a cloak of gold. Even now she must be climbing up the rugged steepness of our garden path.

LADY GREGOR. Hark! I hear a footfall on the mossy steps. Go to the door!

DONALD. I am afraid, my lady — afraid!

LADY GREGOR. Do as I bid you! Go to the door! [*Donald moves fearfully to the great door.*] If she should knock, demanding entrance, you must command her in her master's voice to return unto her ship.

DONALD. I would not dare, my lady.

LADY GREGOR. Think of the peril of your master's soul, and know that this night's work depends on you.

[*Fair Annie knocks upon the door.*]

DONALD. What shall I do, my lady?

LADY GREGOR. Send her away! Bid her return unto the sea. [*There is more knocking.*]

DONALD. Who knocks upon the door?

FAIR ANNIE.

'T is I, Fair Annie, of Loch Ryan!
'T is I, your young girl-wife!
I have come across the stormy sea
To seek the Love o' my life.
[*After a slight pause, she knocks again.*]
Oh, open the door, Love Gregor, I pray;
Oh, open and let me in,

For the wind blows through my yellow hair
And the rain drops o'er my chin.

DONALD. May I not open the door, my lady? May I not open the door?

LADY GREGOR. Nay, send her away? Away to the sea! Bid her return to her boat. [*Knocking.*]

DONALD.

Away! Away! you wile warlock!
Away, you daughter of sin!
As Mary Mother is mine aid,
You shall not enter in.

FAIR ANNIE.

I am neither a witch nor a wile warlock!
Nor mermaid of the sea;
I am Fair Annie of Loch Ryan!
Oh, open the door to me!

DONALD. What shall I do, my lady! Oh, tell me, what shall I do?

LADY GREGOR. Send her away — away to the sea — bid her return to her ship. [*Fair Annie knocks.*]

DONALD.

You shall not sit at my castle's board,
I swear it by Jesus' Sire.
And as He reigns in the Heavens above
You shall not rest by my fire.

FAIR ANNIE.

Oh, open the door now, Love Gregor,
Open the door, I pray,
Or your young son that is in mine arms
Will be dead ere it be day.

[*Lady Gregor crosses to the great door. She speaks as though overwhelmed by hatred and rage.*]

LADY GREGOR.

Away! Away! you ill woman,
For here you shall not win in.

Go drown yourself in the raging sea,
Or hang from the gallows grim.
[*There is a sound as of a woman sobbing. Lady Gregor listens at the door.*]
She is going away, away to the sea.
She returns once more to her boat!
I can hear her trip o'er the mossy stones;
The rose-briars tear at her gown.
I can hear her moan a hush-a-bye
To soothe her greeting son.
[*Lady Gregor and Donald listen for a few moments.*]

DONALD. I hear her no more — there is no sound of her. Naught can I hear but the wailing of the wind and the waves.

LADY GREGOR. She has gone! Fair Annie has gone — gone down to the sea! Oh, may the cloak of night hide her from Love Gregor's eyes, for he must not know of this coming of his bride.

[*There is the sound of a door opening.*]

DONALD. Listen! Did you not hear my master's door?

LADY GREGOR. Perhaps Love Gregor has awakened.

DONALD. I hear him coming, my lady. He walks like a man that trembles with fear!

[*Enter Love Gregor.*]

LOVE GREGOR. Did you not hear a knocking on the door? Did you not hear a cry in the wind outside?

LADY GREGOR. We have heard nothing — nothing but the wailing of the wind and the waves. Go back again to your couch, my son. You look sick and weary. Return again to you rest.

LOVE GREGOR. I dare not sleep again, for sleep to-night is full of terrors.

LADY GREGOR. What terrors, my son?

LOVE GREGOR. I dreamt a dream of Fair Annie — a dream that shook me to the soul.

LADY GREGOR. What was your dream, my son?

LOVE GREGOR. I dreamt Fair Annie came to seek me here at Castle Gregor, but she found me not. I dreamt that she knocked upon our door, but it was not opened to her; that she called upon my name and I heard her not. Then at the peep o' day I rose from my couch, and when I opened the great door, Fair Annie lay upon our threshold — dead — clothed in the shroud of her golden hair, and with a silver dagger thrust into her heart.

LADY GREGOR. What dagger was that, my son?

LOVE GREGOR. 'T was the dagger you wore at your side, my mother.

LADY GREGOR. Such dreams are the sickness of love, dear son. Sweep them away from your brain! Think no more upon them.

LOVE GREGOR. That were impossible, my lady mother, for the dream I dreamt was no common dream. Perchance it was sent as a warning of Evil to come. How dark is this hall! Light the candles once more.

[*Donald lights the candles.*]

LADY GREGOR. What will you do, my son?

LOVE GREGOR. I will set out at once to Fair Annie's home, for there shall I learn the truth.

LADY GREGOR. Be not so hasty, my son. These fears are born of your dreaming. To-morrow they all will be gone. Stay with your mother at Castle Gregor — stay with her but a while, and by her love and her tenderness she will banish these fears from your mind.

LOVE GREGOR. Nay, nay — I must go to Fair Annie — I must go to her this very night. Donald, bid my mariners to prepare my gallant ship. As soon as the storm has past I shall set forth to the home of my bride.

[*Exit Donald.*]

LADY GREGOR. But would you leave me here alone, my son?

LOVE GREGOR. There are many faithful servants at Castle Gregor; they will watch over you till I return.

LADY GREGOR. Stay with me but a day or two.

LOVE GREGOR. Nay, I must set forth this night. I cannot rest till I have learnt the truth of Annie's silence — till I have torn away the veil of mystery which time hath drawn between us.

LADY GREGOR. Stay, stay, my son! Have you no love thoughts for the woman who gave to you the precious gift of life?

LOVE GREGOR. Why do you ask me that? Surely I have rendered to the full the services of filial duty?

LADY GREGOR. True, true, my son, but the services of duty are not all that I would win. Are your love-thoughts given wholly to Fair Annie?

LOVE GREGOR. The best of my thoughts are hers, as the best of her thoughts are mine.

LADY GREGOR. What are the best of a maiden's thoughts? O foolish son, to treasure thus the affections of a young and untried girl! After life's struggle hath given strength unto a woman's will; after life's sorrow hath touched her heart to tenderness, then may she know the great, the abiding love. The love of a young girl is but a selfish and a shallow thing — oft born of a smile and drowned in a tear.

LOVE GREGOR. Set a watch over your tongue, good mother, lest you should speak things unforgivable.

LADY GREGOR. 'T is not at your command that I will guard my speech, Love Gregor. Must I stand aside and watch Fair Annie cast her net of enchantment about your soul? Must I be silent and see your manhood overwhelmed by a false and fleeting love?

LOVE GREGOR. A false and fleeting love! Such words are

madness. A truer love ne'er bound two human hearts together — it is a love that hath given vision to our eyes and wings to our souls.

LADY GREGOR. Fine phrases often hide the grossness of a common lust.

LOVE GREGOR. Say no more, my mother — say no more! These words of yours have banished me for aye from Castle Gregor. When I set forth to-night, I go never to return.

LADY GREGOR. Nay, nay, my son, you must not leave me here alone. Forget my hasty words.

LOVE GREGOR. Such words cannot be forgotten.

LADY GREGOR. But promise that you will return! Think! Think, my son! You are all I have to love — all that remains to me of life. Oh, say you will come back again, I could not face the autumn of my life if you were absent from my side. Oh, say you will come back again!

LOVE GREGOR. If you will promise ne'er to speak unkindly of my wife — ne'er to hold up our love to scorn, then will I come again.

LADY GREGOR. That is a hard thing to promise.

LOVE GREGOR. If you cannot pledge your word to this, then we, to-night, must part for ever.

LADY GREGOR. My son, my son, I cannot let you pass out of my life.

LOVE GREGOR. Then you promise?

LADY GREGOR. Yes — I promise.

[*Exit Lady Gregor, trying to hide her humiliation.*]

LOVE GREGOR. How wild and confused are the cries of the wind! Surely the hounds of Heaven are hunting to-night some precious quarry. The horrors of my dream so hang about my mind that I dare not return to my rest. I will sit by the fire and read for a while. Here is my mother's book — God's Holy Word. 'T is said that if a man in trouble open suddenly God's Book there

will he find sweet words to comfort him. [*He opens the book and discovers Annie's letter.*] Why, what is this? A letter! And written in Fair Annie's hand! How came it here betwixt the pages of my mother's book? [*Reads the letter.*] What words are these? My Annie is coming to see me here; she is coming to Castle Gregor! Why — why should these precious words have been hidden from mine eyes? I cannot understand.

[*Enter Donald.*]

DONALD. Is not her ladyship here?

LOVE GREGOR. My lady mother hath gone unto her room. [*Donald crosses to door right.*] Stay, Donald! I would speak with you. When I came from the garden to-night, was not my lady mother reading God's Book?

DONALD. She was, my lord. It is her custom to seek the comfort of its words each night before she goes unto her rest.

LOVE GREGOR. After I had come into the hall, did I not ask if a letter had arrived from Castle Ryan?

DONALD. You did, my lord.

LOVE GREGOR. And you answered "No"?

DONALD. I — I answered — "No!"

LOVE GREGOR. Was that the truth, Donald? Look into mine eyes, Donald! Was that the truth?

DONALD. It was not, my lord.

LOVE GREGOR. You told me a lie?

DONALD. Yes, my lord. I told you a lie, but you must forgive me, my lord. It was to save your soul from everlasting death that I spoke falsely — it was to shield you, my dear master, from the spells of a wicked woman.

LOVE GREGOR. Was it my mother that spoke to you of these spells?

DONALD. It was, my lord. Your mother loves you well, my lord!

LOVE GREGOR. Was it love that made her feed her son with lies when the truth meant so much happiness to him? Was it love that made her seek to part Love Gregor from his bride? Oh, well — right well, hath she played her part and I must ever scorn myself to have been so easily deceived. What must I do when Fair Annie comes?

DONALD. Think you she will return, my lord?

LOVE GREGOR. Return?

DONALD. She went a while since down unto the sea. Ere this she will have entered once more into her boat.

LOVE GREGOR. Have entered once more into her boat? Nay, answer me not, for now the truth breaks in upon my mind. That knocking I heard was no false sound of slumber; that cry was not uttered by a phantom of dreamland — 't was the knocking of Fair Annie — 't was the cry of my wife. [*Sounds of distress are heard outside.*] Open the door, Donald — open the door — nay, quickly, quickly! [*Donald opens the door.*] What do you see?

DONALD. There is a flickering of torches amid the pine-trees. Great shadowy figures are hurrying down to the beach.

LOVE GREGOR. Why are their voices so troubled?

DONALD. I cannot tell, my lord, unless some mischance hath come unto the Lady Annie's boat.

LOVE GREGOR. Dear God, forbid! Let me pass, Donald, let me pass! I am coming to you, dear Annie. Surely my heart hath wings to speed me to your side.

[*He rushes out. As his voice dies away, Donald hurries to the door right.*]

DONALD [*calling*]. My lady! My lady!

[*Enter Lady Gregor.*]

LADY GREGOR. What is the matter — where is Love Gregor?

DONALD. He hath gone down to the shore — he hath gone to seek the Lady Annie.

LADY GREGOR. Then he knows that his bride has been here to-night?

DONALD. My master knows all.

LADY GREGOR. Think you he will call her back unto the land?

DONALD. I fear that is impossible — I fear that some mischance hath fallen on her ship.

LADY GREGOR. Nay, say not that. If any harm should come unto the Lady Annie, Love Gregor never would forgive me. Look out, Donald — what do you see?

DONALD. The torch-bearers are casting the flare of their lights upon the sea-wrack that fringes our bay. They are seeking for something.

LADY GREGOR. Why do their voices mingle in such confusion? They are silent now — so hushed they might be gazing on some sight that robs them of their speech. They speak again — the rush of their words becomes more and more rapid. My blood is chilled with fear. I scarcely dare to think on what hath happed.

[*Song of the Torch-Bearers heard outside.*]

TORCH-BEARERS.

Oh, cherry, cherry is her cheek,
And golden is her hair,
But clay-cold are her rosy lips
No breath of life stirs there.

DONALD. Did you hear the words of the torch-bearers?

LADY GREGOR. I heard them well. Think you that Lady Annie is drowned?

DONALD. Such is the burden of their song.

LADY GREGOR. Oh, what is this calamity that hath come so near our door! If Fair Annie be drowned, never will Love Gregor forgive me — never!

DONALD. They are bringing her up through the water-gate.

LADY GREGOR. Hath her face the paleness of death?

DONALD. I only can see her golden hair, that glints in the torches' light. 'T is dank and wet and clings round her like a Sea-Queen's robe.

LADY GREGOR. They must not bring her here, Donald. Shut the door! I dare not look upon her now! Shut the door! Shut the door!

DONALD. Be calm, my lady, be calm. They have set her down on the terrace, and now that the rain hath ceased I can see the shape of her elfin face. Surely no mortal maid had beauty like to hers.

LADY GREGOR. Is Love Gregor beside her?

DONALD. He stands gazing with tearless eyes upon her fair young face.

LADY GREGOR. Tell him that I would speak with him.

DONALD. They take up the body again, they bear it towards my master's ship.

LADY GREGOR. He will not go hence without saying farewell! Tell him that I must speak with him. [*Exit Donald.*] Why do I fear to meet Love Gregor face to face? Doth my hate of Fair Annie now die at the thought of its own deed? Nay; I must keep it alive; I must hate her still if I would have the strength to look into Love Gregor's eyes. [*Song of the Torch-Bearers outside.*]

TORCH-BEARERS.

Oh, first he kissed her cherry cheek,
And next he kissed her chin,
Then softly pressed her rosy lips,
But there was no breath within.

[*At the end of the song enter Love Gregor slowly.*]

LADY GREGOR. Are you going away, my son?

LOVE GREGOR. Yes, my lady mother, I am going away. The storm is passing and the mariners make ready my ship.

LADY GREGOR. Whither would you go, my son?

LOVE GREGOR. To Castle Ryan, to bear Fair Annie to her home — to set her in that field of sleep where rest the noble fathers of her race.

LADY GREGOR. You will return, my son?

LOVE GREGOR. No, no, my lady mother. This deed of yours hath set a sea of injury betwixt us that only time can bridge.

LADY GREGOR. You must forgive, my son. I never meant to kill your bride — I never meant to kill her, Love Gregor. Hatred and jealousy made blind mine eyes.

LOVE GREGOR. You drove her from our Castle-door, and she had come so far to seek for me.

LADY GREGOR. Judge not too harshly, my son. When time hath shown to you the mysteries of a woman's heart, then will you understand that bitterness that falls upon neglected motherhood. Listen, Love Gregor. When you were a child you lived in a world of dreams. You walked and talked each day with creatures born of your own imagination. You did not know the living people that moved around you, the people who loved and tended you. All through the weary years I waited, thinking that one day you would come out of your world of dreams and, beholding the mother standing at your side, give to her a little of your love, a little of your gratitude.

LOVE GREGOR. Why have you not spoken to me of this before?

LADY GREGOR. Often have I tried, but your father's neglect had bred in me a cold and stubborn pride. To him, women were but love-toys — to be enjoyed in an idle hour, when men were weary of the fight and of the chase. Promise me, my son, you will come back.

LOVE GREGOR. I may not return until my work be done.

LADY GREGOR. Cannot that work be done at Castle Gregor, where love and tenderness shall make of every task a pleasure? Listen, my son, here shall you weave through-

out the day your garlands of song, and at the falling of the night the minstrel shall bring his harp into the hall and, by his muse's magic charm, give to your words a double splendour.

LOVE GREGOR. Nay, nay, my lady mother. I may not stay. Fair Annie's love is calling me away, away into the world of men.

LADY GREGOR. Annie is dead! How can her love now come between us?

LOVE GREGOR. Annie is dead, and dead is the lesser part of our great love. Gone for ever is the love of kisses, tender words and fond embraces, but the greater love still lives and 't is that love that now is calling me unto the world, that I may show its glory unto men and by its aid conquer in the battle of my soul.

LADY GREGOR. But, when the battle hath been won, will you not then return?

LOVE GREGOR. Time will direct my steps.

LADY GREGOR. Time will also soften the harsh memories of this night. I know you will return, my son, and when you come again unto your home you will find your mother waiting for you. Good-bye, my son.

LOVE GREGOR. Good-bye, my lady mother.

LADY GREGOR. Kiss me just once before you go. Look how the recovered moon hath set your vessel in a blaze of light! Is not this a happy augury?

[*The song of the Torch-Bearers outside.*]

TORCH-BEARERS.

Her shroud a shroud of golden hair,
Sweet roses on her breast,
And the silver moon to shed her light
Over her dreamless rest.

LADY GREGOR. Good-bye, dear son — your mother will be waiting for you — waiting to welcome you home!

CURTAIN

THE ROMANCERS [1]

By EDMOND ROSTAND

Translated by Mary Hendee

CHARACTERS

Percinet, *a lover.*
Straforel, *a bravo.*
Bergamin, *father of Percinet.*
Pasquinot, *father of Sylvette.*
Sylvette, *daughter of Pasquinot.*
Swordsmen, and Musicians.

The scene is laid where you will, provided the costumes are pretty.

Scene: *The stage is cut in two by an old wall, mossy and garlanded with luxuriant vines. To the right, a corner of Bergamin's park; to the left, a corner of Pasquinot's. On each side, against the wall, a bench.*

When the curtain rises, Percinet is seated on the wall, with a book on his knees, from which he is reading to Sylvette. She stands on the bench in her father's park, her chin in her hands, her elbows against the wall, listening attentively.

sylvette. O Monsieur Percinet, how beautiful it is.
percinet. Is n't it? Hear Romeo's reply! [*He reads.*]

"It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day

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Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops:
I must be gone. . . ."

SYLVETTE [*alert with animation*]. Sh!

PERCINET [*listens a moment, then*]. No one! So, mademoiselle, don't have the air of an affrighted birdling on a branch, ready to spread wing at the slightest sound. Hear the immortal lovers talking:

She. "Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I:
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torchbearer."

He. "Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;
I am content so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say yon gray is not the morning's eye;
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads;
I have more care to stay than will to go:
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so."

SYLVETTE. Oh, no! I won't have him talk of that; if he does, I shall cry.

PERCINET. Then we'll shut our book till to-morrow, and, since you wish it, let sweet Romeo live. [*He closes the book and looks about him.*] What an adorable spot! It seems to be made for lulling one's self to the lines of the great William.

SYLVETTE. Yes, the lines are very beautiful, and the divine murmur in the branches accompanies them well, it is true. Yes, Monsieur Percinet, the lines are very beautiful, but what makes their beauty more touching to me is your reading them in your musical voice.

PERCINET. Base flatterer!

SYLVETTE [*sighing*]. Ah, poor lovers! how cruel their fate! How unkind people were to them! [*A sigh.*] It makes me think . . .

PERCINET [*eagerly*]. Of what?

SYLVETTE. Nothing!

PERCINET. Of something that sends you suddenly very rosy!

SYLVETTE [*as before*]. Nothing!

PERCINET [*shaking his finger at her*]. Oh! the dissembler — with the too transparent eyes! . . . I see of what you are thinking! [*Lowers his voice.*] Of our parents.

SYLVETTE. Perhaps . . .

PERCINET. Of your father, of mine, and the hatred that divides them!

SYLVETTE. Ah, yes! it is that which pains me, that which often makes me weep in secret. Last month, when I came home from the convent, my father pointed toward your father's park, and said: "My dear child, you see here the lair of my mortal enemy, Bergamin. Promise to avoid that villain and his son, and to be their enemy forever, or I'll disown you; for their race has always execrated yours." I made the promise; you see, monsieur, how I keep it.

PERCINET. And did not I, too, promise my father to hate you always, Sylvette? . . . and I love you!

SYLVETTE. Holy Virgin!

PERCINET. And I love thee, child!

SYLVETTE. 'T is a sin!

PERCINET. A great sin! But what could be expected? The more one is forbidden to love a person, the more desire he has to do it. . . . Kiss me, Sylvette!

SYLVETTE. Oh, never!

[*She jumps off the bench and retreats.*]

PERCINET. Yet you love me.

SYLVETTE. What does he say?

PERCINET. Dear child, I say that against which your heart still protests, but which to doubt longer were a delusion. I say . . . what you yourself but just now

said, yes, you yourself, Sylvette, in comparing the lovers of Verona to these two children here.

SYLVETTE. I did n't compare. . . .

PERCINET. Yes, dear; your father and my father, to Juliet's father and Romeo's. So we are Romeo and Juliet, and so we love each other madly; and in spite of their bitter hate, I brave at once Pasquinot-Capulet, Bergamin-Montague!

SYLVETTE [*coming a little nearer the wall*]. Then we love each other! But how, Monsieur Percinet, has it come about so quickly?

PERCINET. Love is born — one knows not how nor why — when it should be born. I often saw you passing by my window.

SYLVETTE. And I you.

PERCINET. And our eyes communed by stealth.

SYLVETTE. One day, there, by the wall, I was gathering nuts. By chance —

PERCINET. By chance, I was reading Shakespeare, there. And to unite our two hearts, see how everything conspired!

SYLVETTE. The wind caught up, psst! my ribbon, and blew it over to you.

PERCINET. To return it, I climbed on the bench.

SYLVETTE [*climbing*]. And I climbed on the bench.

PERCINET. And every day since, little one, I have waited for you, and every day my heart beats faster, till there goes up, oh, blessed signal! there behind the wall, your sweet, aerie laugh, which has not died away, when your head emerges from the trembling tangle of the wild virgin vine!

SYLVETTE. Since we love each other, we must be engaged.

PERCINET. 'T is precisely what I was thinking.

SYLVETTE [*solemnly*]. Last of the Bergamins, to you the last of the Pasquinots allies herself!

PERCINET. Noble folly!

SYLVETTE. Future ages will talk of us.

PERCINET. Too tender children of too cruel fathers!

SYLVETTE. Yet who knows, my friend, perhaps the hour is sounding when Heaven wills that through us their hatred shall be dissolved?

PERCINET. I doubt it.

SYLVETTE. But I — I have faith in fortune, and I see already five or six possible solutions.

PERCINET. Really? And what?

SYLVETTE. Well, suppose — in more than one old romance I 've read the like — suppose the Reigning Prince comes to spend the day. I run to entreat him, tell him of our love, of the old feud between our fathers. — A king surely married Rodrigue and Chimène. — The Prince summons my father and Monsieur Bergamin, and reconciles them.

PERCINET. And gives me your hand.

SYLVETTE. Or again, it might turn out as in *Peau d'Âne*. You are wasting away. A stupid doctor condemns you to die.

PERCINET. My father, distracted cries, "What do you want?"

SYLVETTE. You say, "I want Sylvette!"

PERCINET. And his stubborn pride is constrained to bend.

SYLVETTE. Or again, another adventure. An old duke, having seen somewhere a painting of me, loves me, and sends a splendid equerry in his name, who offers to make me a duchess.

PERCINET. Then, you say, "No!"

SYLVETTE. He is angry. One beautiful night, in some somber path of the park, where I have gone to dream of you, I am seized! I cry out!

PERCINET. And without delay, I arrive. I draw my dagger, fight like a lion, cut down —

SYLVETTE. Three or four men. My father rushes up, takes you in his arms. You tell your name, he softens, gives me to my rescuer, and your father, proud of your valor, consents.

PERCINET. And we live happy together ever after!

SYLVETTE. There 's nothing impossible about it, it seems to me.

PERCINET [*hearing a noise*]. Some one is coming!

SYLVETTE [*losing her head*]. Kiss me!

PERCINET [*kissing her*]. And to-night at the hour of prayers, you will come? — Say it!

SYLVETTE. No!

PERCINET. Yes!

SYLVETTE [*disappearing behind the wall*]. Your father!

[*Percinet jumps briskly down.*]

[*Sylvette is behind the wall, and consequently invisible to Bergamin, who enters.*]

BERGAMIN. I find you alone again, dreaming in this corner of the park?

PERCINET. Father, I adore this corner of the park. I love to sit on this bench sheltered by the overhanging vines of the wall. Do you see how graceful the vine is? Notice these festoons with their shapely arabesques. . . . One breathes here such a pure air!

BERGAMIN. In front of this wall?

PERCINET. I adore the wall!

BERGAMIN. I don't see what there is adorable about it.

SYLVETTE [*aside*]. He cannot see!

PERCINET. But it is an admirable old wall, crested with green, festooned, here with ivy, there with scarlet creeper, again with the snail-flower's mauve velvet panicles, and here with honeysuckle, and there with woodbine: — this old crumbling centenary of a wall, whose cracks let out into the sunshine, strange, rough, mane-

like growths, stellated with charming little flowers! — this wall on which the moss is of a thickness to make for the humble bench sunk in its side, a back fit for a king's throne!

BERGAMIN. Ta, ta, youngster! Would you have me believe you come here for the sake of the wall's beautiful eyes?

PERCINET. Yes, the wall's beautiful eyes! [*Turns toward the wall.*] Very beautiful eyes they are! . . . Fresh, azure smiles, sweet blue astonishments, clear, deep flower eyes, you touch our hearts! If ever tears empearl your chalices, we'll distil them with a kiss!

BERGAMIN. But the wall has n't eyes!

PERCINET. It has morning-glories!

[*He quickly breaks off a flower and presents it gracefully to Bergamin.*]

SYLVETTE. Is he not spirituelle!

BERGAMIN. He 's a fool! — But I know what makes him lose his head. [*Movement of consternation on the part of Sylvette and Percinet.*] You come here to read in secret. [*Takes the book sticking out of Percinet's pocket, and looks at the back.*] Plays! [*Opens it and lets it fall with horror.*] In verse! Poetry! No wonder your head is topsy-turvy! No wonder you wander off to dream, and talk of woodbine, and see blue eyes in the wall! A wall has no need to be pretty, but strong! I'll have all those green things taken off; they might hide some breach: and to better guard us from an insolent neighbor, I'll have this side re-mortared, build a fine white wall, very white, very smooth, very trim. In place of — woodbine, I'll have grooves cut in the plaster, and dress out the wall with bits of broken bottles, sharp as steel, set in serried ranks. . . .

PERCINET. Mercy!

BERGAMIN. No mercy! I'll have it like that! All along, all along, all along the top!

SYLVETTE and PERCINET [*in consternation*]. Oh!

BERGAMIN [*seating himself on the bench*]. Come, let's talk! [*He gets up and walks away from the wall.*] Hm! walls, if they have n't eyes, have ears. [*He starts to mount the bench. Affright of Percinet. At the movement, Sylvette crouches against the wall. But Bergamin gives up, with a grimace, and motions for his son to mount instead.*] See if some inquisitive —

PERCINET [*climbing lithely on the bench, and hanging over the wall; low, to Sylvette, who springs up again*]. Until to-night!

SYLVETTE [*giving him her hand, which he kisses; very low*]. I will come before the hour strikes.

PERCINET [*the same*]. I shall be there.

SYLVETTE [*the same*]. I adore you!

BERGAMIN [*to Percinet*]. Well?

PERCINET [*springing to the ground; aloud*]. No one!

BERGAMIN [*reassured, sits down again*]. Then let's talk. My son, I wish you to marry.

SYLVETTE. Ah!

BERGAMIN. What's that?

PERCINET. Nothing.

BERGAMIN. I heard a feeble cry.

PERCINET [*looking up*]. Some wounded bird —

SYLVETTE. Alas!

PERCINET. Among the branches.

BERGAMIN. Well, then, my son, after mature reflection, I've made a choice for you.

PERCINET [*goes up the stage whistling*]. Tee! tee!

BERGAMIN [*after an instant of suffocation*]. I am determined: I shall force you, sir!

PERCINET [*coming back*]. Tee! tee! tee! tee!

BERGAMIN. Will you stop whistling, wretched blackbird! . . . A woman still young, and very rich. A pearl!

PERCINET. And if I don't want your pearl!

BERGAMIN. Wait! I'll show you, miscreant!

PERCINET [*lowering his father's raised cane*]. Spring has filled the hedges with the sound of wings, and the wood streams see little birds in couples lighting on their banks to caress each other.

BERGAMIN. Shameless fellow!

PERCINET [*same action*]. All things laugh and welcome new-born April. The butterflies —

BERGAMIN. Ruffian!

PERCINET [*same action*]. Flock across the fields to wed the flower they love. Love itself —

BERGAMIN. Outlaw!

PERCINET [*same action*]. Puts all hearts in flower; and you would see me make a marriage of convenience!

BERGAMIN. Yes, certainly, monster!

PERCINET. Well, then, no, no, my father. I swear . . . by this wall — which hears me, I hope — to marry so romantically that there never will be seen in any romance anything more madly romantic!

[*He takes to flight.*]

BERGAMIN [*running after him*]. Oh, I'll catch you!

SYLVETTE [*alone*]. Really, I almost understand papa's hatred of that wretch.

PASQUINOT [*entering*]. Well, what might you be doing here, mademoiselle?

SYLVETTE. Nothing. I'm walking.

PASQUINOT. Here? alone? But, unhappy girl! you're not afraid, then?

SYLVETTE. I'm not timid, Papa.

PASQUINOT. Alone, near this wall! But I forbid you to approach it! Imprudent child, look well at that park! You behold there the retreat of my mortal enemy!

SYLVETTE. I know, Father.

PASQUINOT. And you expose yourself to insulting words, to — Does any one know of what these people are

capable? If that blackguard or his son knew that my daughter comes alone to dream under these elms — oh, the very thought of it makes me shudder! But I'm going to sheathe the wall, barb it, bristle it with iron, so that any one trying to scale it shall be gored, shall be impaled, and that spikes shall pierce his flesh if he so much as approach it.

SYLVETTE [*aside*]. He won't do it; it would cost too much. Papa is a little close.

PASQUINOT. Do go in, quick!

[*She goes. He follows her with wrathful eyes.*]

BERGAMIN [*speaking into the wing*]. This note to Monsieur Straforel, immediately.

PASQUINOT [*runs briskly to the wall and climbs up*]. Bergamin!

BERGAMIN [*does the same*]. Pasquinot! [*They embrace.*]

PASQUINOT. How goes it?

BERGAMIN. Pretty well.

PASQUINOT. How's your gout?

BERGAMIN. Better. And your influenza?

PASQUINOT. The animal grips me always.

BERGAMIN. Well, sir, the marriage is made!

PASQUINOT. Eh?

BERGAMIN. I hid in the shrubbery and heard everything. They adore each other.

PASQUINOT. Hurray!

BERGAMIN. Let's hasten affairs. [*He rubs his hands.*] Ha! ha! Both widowers and both fathers, I of a son whom his mother, a little too romantic, named Percinet—

PASQUINOT. Yes, it is a grotesque name.

BERGAMIN. You of a dreamy girl, Sylvette, of the azure soul. What was our aim, the only one we had?

PASQUINOT. To get rid of this wall.

BERGAMIN. To live together —

PASQUINOT. And merge our two estates in one.

BERGAMIN. Scheme of old friends —

PASQUINOT. And property-holders.

BERGAMIN. For success, what was necessary?

PASQUINOT. To marry our children.

BERGAMIN. To marry them, yes, but should we be triumphant, if they had suspected it? Marriage without obstacles is n't tempting to two such poetic young simpletons. Profiting from the fact that they had grown up far from here, we hid our project of a union, and reflecting that to hinder them from seeing each other was the surest means of bringing them together, that 't would please them to think they were stealing the sweets, I invented this admirable hatred. You doubted the success of such an unheard-of-plan. Well, sir, we've nothing more to do but say yes!

PASQUINOT. Good! But how — how be adroit enough to consent without rousing their suspicions? . . . I who called you trickster, dotard? —

BERGAMIN. Trickster sufficed: never go beyond justice.

PASQUINOT. What pretext . . . ?

BERGAMIN. Listen! Your daughter herself has just suggested the final stroke, and while she was talking to Percinet I sketched my plot. They have a rendezvous here to-night. Percinet will arrive first. The moment Sylvette appears, masked men, who have been in hiding, seize her. She cries out. Then my young buck rushes on the ruffians, and attacks with his sword. They pretend to flee. You arrive. I appear. Your daughter and her honor are safe. Your joy overflows. You let fall a few tears, bless the heroic rescuer, I relent: — tableau!

PASQUINOT. Ah, that's genius! . . . I say! . . . Genius!

BERGAMIN [*modest*]. Eh? . . . Yes . . . something like it — Hush! Notice that man coming! It's Straforel, the

swordsman. I wrote to him just now about my plan. He's going to put the play on the boards.

[*Straforel, in a gorgeous costume, appears at the back of the stage, and comes majestically forward.*]

BERGAMIN [*getting down from the wall and bowing*]. Hm! Let me first make you acquainted with my friend Pasquinot.

STRAFOREL [*bowing*]. Monsieur!

[*Upon raising his head he is surprised not to see Pasquinot.*]

BERGAMIN [*pointing him out astride the wall*]. There, on the wall.

STRAFOREL [*aside*]. Astonishing exercise for a man of his years!

BERGAMIN. My plan appears to you . . . ?

STRAFOREL. Simple.

BERGAMIN. Ah, yes, you know how to comprehend, to act quickly —

STRAFOREL. And to be silent.

BERGAMIN. Pretense of abduction, is n't it, and a feigned fight?

STRAFOREL. That is all clear.

BERGAMIN. You must have adroit swordsmen, who won't wound my boy. I'm very fond of him. He's my only child.

STRAFOREL. I shall conduct the affair myself.

BERGAMIN. Ah, good! Then I have no fears.

PASQUINOT [*low, to Bergamin*]. Say, ask him how much it's going to cost.

BERGAMIN [*to Straforel*]. What do you charge for an abduction, master swordsman?

STRAFOREL. That depends, monsieur, upon the kind. We make abductions at almost all prices. But in the present case, if I understand aright, the cost does n't

count. I should take one — of the first class, monsieur.

BERGAMIN [*dazed*]. Ah, you have several classes!

STRAFOREL. Certainly! Know, sir, that we have the abduction with two men in black, very commonplace, in a cab — that kind is scarcely at all in demand: a splendid abduction in a court carriage, with powdered and frizzled lackeys — the perukes come extra — with mutes, eunuchs, negroes, gendarmes, brigands, musketeers at will: abduction by coach, with two, three, four, five horses — the number increased ad libitum: a quiet abduction in a berlin — a little somber: the humorous abduction, in a bag: the romantic, by boat — but we must have a lake! — the Venetian, in a gondola — which needs a lagoon! We have the abduction with or without moonlight — moonlight abductions, being more sought after, are dearer! We have the sinister abduction, with lightning, signals, tumult, clash of weapons, wide-brimmed hats, gray mantles! There's the brutal abduction, the courteous; the abduction with torches — very pretty! — an abduction with masks, we call classic: the gallant abduction, done to music: the abduction in a sedan chair — the gayest of all, monsieur, the newest and the most distinguished!

BERGAMIN [*scratching his head; to Pasquinot*]. Let's see, what do you think?

PASQUINOT. Hm! what do you?

BERGAMIN. I think we ought to strike hard. So much the worse if it costs. Put some imagination into it. Have a little of everything. Make the abduction —

STRAFOREL. Variegated? That is possible.

BERGAMIN. Let's give our young romancers enough to last them: sedan, mantles, torches, music, masks!

STRAFOREL [*writing in a notebook*]. To group these various elements, we'll have a first class, with supplements.

BERGAMIN. Yes, have it so.

STRAFOREL. I shall be back very soon. But it is necessary that Monsieur Pasquinot leave his gate ajar.

BERGAMIN. We will leave it ajar.

STRAFOREL [*bowing*]. Gentlemen, I wish you good evening. [*As he leaves the stage.*] First class with supplements.

[*Bergamin remounts the wall, and sits facing Pasquinot.*]

PASQUINOT. The worthy man retires in all his glory, without setting the price.

BERGAMIN. Never mind. The thing is done. The wall's to be taken down. We shall have one home.

PASQUINOT. And in winter, oh, joy! but one rent to pay in the city.

BERGAMIN. We'll do charming things in the park.

PASQUINOT. We'll trim the yew-trees.

BERGAMIN. We'll make gravel walks.

PASQUINOT. We'll have our monograms interlaced, in flowers, in the middle of each bed.

BERGAMIN. As these stretches of lawn are a little severe —

PASQUINOT. We'll relieve them a bit by ornaments.

BERGAMIN. We'll have a new pond, filled with fish.

PASQUINOT. We'll have some rocks, a fountain — Hey, old fellow! How does it strike you?

BERGAMIN. That all our vows are accomplished.

PASQUINOT. We'll grow old together.

BERGAMIN. Your daughter is provided for.

PASQUINOT. Your son also.

BERGAMIN. My good Pasquinot!

PASQUINOT. My good Bergamin!

[*They fall into each other's arms.*]

[*Sylvette and Percinet come in quickly on the two sides.*]

SYLVETTE [*seeing her father in Bergamin's arms*]. Oh!

BERGAMIN [*catching sight of Sylvette; to Pasquinot*]. Your daughter!

PERCINET [*sees his father embracing Pasquinot*]. Ah!

PASQUINOT [*perceiving Percinet: to Bergamin*]. Your son!

BERGAMIN [*low, to Pasquinot*]. Fight! [*They transform the embrace into a hand-to-hand scuffle. Aloud.*] Blackguard!

PASQUINOT. Ruffian!

SYLVETTE [*pulling her father by the coat-tails*]. Papa!

PERCINET [*same action, to Bergamin*]. Papa!

BERGAMIN. Let us alone, brats!

PASQUINOT. He insulted me!

BERGAMIN. He struck me!

PASQUINOT. Coward!

SYLVETTE. Papa!!

BERGAMIN. Villain!

PERCINET. Papa!!

PASQUINOT. Brigand!

SYLVETTE. Papa!!! [*They succeed in separating them.*]

PERCINET [*hurrying his father away*]. Let's go into the house. It's late.

BERGAMIN [*trying to return*]. I'm in a towering passion! [*Percinet leads him off.*]

PASQUINOT [*same action with Sylvette*]. I'm raging!

SYLVETTE [*drawing him away*]. It's getting cold. Think of your rheumatism.

[*The daylight dies out. The stage is empty a little time, then Straforel, his swordsmen, musicians, etc., enter Pasquinot's park.*]

STRAFOREL. One star gleams already in the sky. The day's in flight. [*He arranges his men.*] You there! — you there! — you there! Yes, the hour of prayers must be near. When the bell tolls, she comes, all in her white. Then I will whistle. [*He looks at the sky.*] The moon? 'T is perfect! We shall not miss a single effect. [*Ob-*

serving the extravagant mantles of the swordsmen.] The cloaks are excellent. Let the swords raise them a little higher. Bear down on the hilts! [*The sedan is brought in.*] Put the chair here, in the shade. [*Perceives that the porters are black.*] Ah! negroes! Not bad! not bad! [*Speaking into the wing.*] The torches, remember, wait for the signal. [*A vague rose light fills the back of the stage, reflected from the torches, which are held behind the trees. The musicians come in.*] The musicians? There! There! Background of rosy light! [*He arranges them.*] Grace, you know, and tenderness! Vary your poses. Let the mandolin stand! Sit down, Viola! as in Watteau's Rural Concert. [*Severely, to a swordsman.*] First masked man there, what do I see? You're lounging? So! Strike an attitude! Good! Instruments *con sordini!* Will you tune? . . . Oh! very good! Sol, mi, si! [*He masks.*]

PERCINET [*enters slowly. As he speaks the following lines, the night grows darker and the stars come out*]. My father is calmed . . . . I could fly here at last. . . . The day declines. . . . The floating fragrance of the elders is intoxicating. . . . Deepening twilight blots out the flowers.

STRAFOREL [*low to the violins*]. Music!

[*The musicians play softly to the end of the act.*]

PERCINET. I feel myself tremble like a reed. What is it? — She is coming!

STRAFOREL [*to the musicians*]. Amoroso!

PERCINET. First rendezvous at night! — I faint! The breeze sounds like a silken robe. One sees the flowers no longer, but their fragrance pierces my soul and fills my eyes with tears! . . . Thou grand old tree, thy top tipped by a star . . . But whence this music? . . . The night has come. Yes, —

Sweet night has come. In heaven's azure deep,
Here, there, one after one, the stars catch fire.

As swells the pond's deep, croaking symphony,
They, too, in rich crescendo are increasing
All round, all round the pale moon's slender crescent.
O splendid spheres of sapphire and of diamond,
O stars! I long have been your ardent lover,
Made vows to you at night — enwrapt, exalted!
But now my poesy has changed its current;
For, holding naïf discourse, her sweet forehead
Adorned with little close-cut locks, Sylvette 's here!
Dear stars of heaven, ye milliards there on high,
Dear old familiar stars, your light is fair:
But when she comes, in veils diaphanous,
Here in the garden's mystic blue, your fires,
Struck with disdain for their own proper light,
Seeing her eyes, will all burn low, poor stars!

SYLVETTE [*appears at the tolling of the bell*]. The bell sounds for prayers. He must be waiting for me. [*A whistle is blown. Straforel rises before her. Torches appear. Masked men pick her up and put her quickly in the sedan.*] Help!

PERCINET. Just Heaven!

SYLVETTE. Percinet! they 're carrying me off!

PERCINET. I come! [*He jumps the wall, draws his sword, and fights with several masks.*] There! — There! — There!

STRAFOREL [*to the musicians*]. Tremolo! [*The violins raise a dramatic tremolo. The swordsmen escape. Straforel, in a theatrical tone.*] By Bacchus! the child is a devil! [*Duel between Straforel and Percinet. Suddenly Straforel carries his hand to his heart.*] The blow . . . is mortal! [*He falls.*]

PERCINET [*running to Sylvette*]. Sylvette!

[*Tableau. She is in the sedan, he on his knees.*]

SYLVETTE. My deliverer!

PASQUINOT [*arriving*]. The son of Bergamin! Your

deliverer! . . . Your deliverer! . . . I'll give him your hand!

SYLVETTE and PERCINET. Heaven!

[*Bergamin has come in on his side, followed by valets with torches.*]

PASQUINOT [*to Bergamin, who appears on the wall*]. Bergamin, your son is a hero! Your pardon, and let us make them happy!

BERGAMIN [*solemnly*]. My hatred abandons me!

PERCINET. Sylvette, we dream! Sylvette, let us speak low, lest the sound of our voices wake us!

BERGAMIN. Hatreds always end in marriages. The peace is made! [*Pointing to the wall.*] There are no more Pyrenees!

PERCINET. Who could have believed my father would change like that!

SYLVETTE [*simply*]. I told you it would all arrange itself.

[*While they go up the stage with Pasquinot, Straforel rises and holds out a paper to Bergamin.*]

BERGAMIN [*low*]. Eh! what? This paper, and your signature? . . . What is it, if you please?

STRAFOREL [*bowing*]. Monsieur, it's the bill!

CURTAIN

MY LADY'S LACE[1]

By EDWARD KNOBLOCK

CHARACTERS

Moeder Kaatje, *the lacemaker.*
Mynheer Cornelis.
Antje, *his daughter.*
Jonkheer Ian, *suitor to Antje.*

Scene: *The garden of a small Dutch house of about 1660. The house, with a door leading into it, and a double window with red shutters, occupies two thirds of the background, extending off to the right — where there is evidently a garden. This garden, on the right side, is railed in by a low wooden fence, over which hang lilac bushes. The other third of the background [to the left] is occupied by a stone wall about seven feet high, with a door in it that leads into a street. When the door is open, a canal way is seen through it with houses on the side opposite. A bench stands under the window by the house, and just under the lilac bush to the right, a square rustic table with a chair above it, and a stool in front of it. Close by the table there is also the traditional lacemaker's pillow on its little wooden stand. The*

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pillow is covered with many bobbins. A blue satin box containing various pieces of lace stands on the table.

Moeder Kaatje is sitting in the garden, the pillow before her, busily making lace. She is a woman of about sixty, plainly dressed in the costume of the period, with a large white apron; a snowy cap frames in her honest, round, red face. She works away in silence for a few minutes.

There is a sudden knock — in fact a quick succession of knocks on the street door.

MOEDER KAATJE [*rising*]. Yes, yes, yes! I come! I come! What's all this to do?

[*She goes to the door, opening it. A girl of seventeen, Antje, enters the garden quickly, closing the door behind her. She is a charming young person — dressed in the delightful "undress" costume of the period: a rich skirt trimmed with a silk border, and a loose satin jacket edged with fur. Over her head she has thrown a veil. When she takes it off she reveals the daintiest of little caps, her ringlets falling over her ears on either side. She is evidently in great distress.*]

MOEDER KAATJE [*surprised*]. Mejuffer Antje!

ANTJE [*flinging herself on Moeder Kaatje's ample bosom*]. Oh, nurse! Nurse! [*She bursts into tears.*]

MOEDER KAATJE. Antje! My little Antje! What's this? In Heaven's name — tell me — my little child, my poppet!

ANTJE. Oh, nurse! My father — my honored father — he desires to marry me to a loathsome man, a terrible man, a man I cannot suffer, and will never suffer as long as there's breath in my body.

MOEDER KAATJE. Come! Come! Why's he so loathsome? So terrible? What's wrong with him?

ANTJE. The whole man's wrong, nurse. He is indeed! Quite wrong! Quite wrong from top to toe.

MOEDER KAATJE. There! There! Calm yourself, my pretty! Sit down. Here, so. Now explain, Antje.

ANTJE. Yes, but —

MOEDER KAATJE. Yes, but — quietly! Quietly! Now. Dry your tears. Quietly! Quietly! Now tell me. Who is he? Where does he come from?

ANTJE. He comes from Amsterdam. And his name's Jonkheer Ian van der Bom. His father's an old friend of my father's. And they 've written and arranged it all between them, with never so much as a word to me [*Moeder Kaatje:* Dear! dear!]. And Jonkheer Ian arrived in town last night, and paid his respects at once to my father. And he supped at the house. And he's coming again to-day. And I — how can I escape him, the hateful creature, with his foolish face and foolish voice?

MOEDER KAATJE. And prithee what said he to you that was so foolish?

ANTJE. Not a word, thank Heaven! Not a word. I never gave him the opportunity. The moment I caught a glimpse of him from the top of the stairs and heard his empty laugh — that was enough for me. I turned forthwith and ran back to my room and undressed and jumped into bed. And when my honored father sent for me, I pleaded a headache and a fainting fit.

MOEDER KAATJE. Oh, did you, miss! Did you!

ANTJE. Yes, and later on, when the maid brought me some supper, I questioned her. He's a fool! A popinjay. Jonkheer Ian! Nothing else. A fop, who's been to Paris and has his mouth full of French words and windy sentiments! And his locks are curled and his hands sweet with musk. I should kill him — kill him in a week — if my father married me to him. I know I should, nurse!

MOEDER KAATJE [*patting her hands*]. Hush! Hush!

Does Mynheer, your father, know you've come here to me?

ANTJE. No! Heaven forbid. I dressed as quietly as a mouse; and waited and waited till I saw my chance. And then out I ran, all the length of the bay and over the bridge, through the little back streets — to you.

MOEDER KAATJE. My little Antje!

ANTJE. You'll help me, nurse, will you not? I've no one to go to but you. No mother but you, nurse. And my father listens to you. He knows what you say is wise and right. You will, nurse, you —

[*There is a knock on the street door.*]

ANTJE. Oh! Who is that?

MOEDER KAATJE [*rising and going to the door*]. Who should it be? Probably the milk.

[*She opens the door. Mynheer Cornelis appears. He is an elderly, sturdy, Dutch gentleman, dressed in dark brown with a plain linen collar, black hat, and long black stick. His costume is very restrained and simple.*]

ANTJE [*at the sight of him*]. Father! Not the milk, nurse.

MYNHEER [*equally surprised*]. Antje! What are you doing here?

ANTJE. I — I came to see nurse, father.

MYNHEER. You sent me down word that your headache was no better.

ANTJE. I know, sir. I — Oh, nurse — speak for me.

MOEDER KAATJE. She's very unhappy, Mynheer. She does not wish to marry the Jonkheer van der Bom.

MYNHEER. Not wish to marry the Jonkheer? How's this? How's this? So that's what your headache's been? You've had no headache at all?

ANTJE. Indeed, honored father, I've had a headache besides. Truly, I have.

MYNHEER. Don't lie to me, Mejuffer. You've had no

headache at all. And if you have, you're not to have one after this, d' you hear? I'll have no nonsense in my house. I know what's best for you. There's not a grander name in the whole of Holland than van der Bom. Not a one. And when he comes here presently —

ANTJE [*terrified*]. He's coming here? *Here?*

MYNHEER. He's to meet me here at nine. He intends buying you a gift, a bridal gift. I told him you were fond of lace — and that Moeder Kaatje was the finest lacemaker of our town. But had I known she was harboring a rebellious child —

ANTJE. No, my father! No! 'T is no fault of hers. I came here not a moment since. Fled here in my despair!

MYNHEER [*flaring up*]. Fled here? Fled here? What sort of language is this? Have you ever been ill-treated by me in all your life? Or talked to roughly — eh? Or crossed in any way? Fled here indeed! I'll have you pick your words, Mejuffer, or — [*waving his stick*] — by Heaven, I'll not be answerable for what I do.

MOEDER KAATJE [*coming between them*]. Mynheer! Mynheer! Remember! She's your daughter! Your dear wife's only child. Mynheer!

MYNHEER. Only child, or no child at all, I tell you she shall marry the man I choose.

MOEDER KAATJE. Mynheer! Mynheer! Forgive my boldness. One word only, I beg of you.

MYNHEER. Well? What is it?

MOEDER KAATJE. Pray consider! After all 't is Mejuffer who has to wed the Jonkheer — not you! How know you, sir, that he's the right man?

ANTJE. Yes, father. How know you he's the right man?

MOEDER KAATJE. How know you he is not merely after her money?

ANTJE. Yes, father! How know you that?

MYNHEER. Listen to them! The right man indeed! After

her money? Is not his father one of my oldest, most honored friends?

ANTJE. The father perhaps. But what of the son?

MYNHEER. The son's his father's son. That's quite enough for me.

ANTJE. Enough for you, sir, perhaps. But not for me.

MYNHEER. And what more would you know of him, Mejuffer Impudence?

ANTJE. Everything, father. Everything.

MYNHEER. Everything indeed! And how mean you to find out everything, pray?

ANTJE. How? [*After a pause.*] Father! Promise to let me do what I shall ask of you — and I'll promise to marry your man — if you still wish.

MYNHEER. I buy no cat in a bag. Speak your meaning.

ANTJE. I mean let me try this Jonkheer. Put him to the test.

MYNHEER. Put him to the test? How?

ANTJE. He's coming here you say? He intends to buy lace?

MYNHEER. Yes. Well?

ANTJE. Let *me* sell him the lace. Let me play Moeder Kaatje, or better — Kaatje's daughter. He's never set eyes on me. He knows me not. I can stand here and sell and bargain like the best of 'em. [*Mynheer:* No! No!] Oh, you shall listen to every word, if you desire. [*Pointing to the house.*] In there! There shall be no cheating. You will judge for yourself. And so shall I. What say you — my honored, my best of fathers?

MYNHEER. No! No! A most unmaidenly proceeding. I'll not hear of it.

ANTJE [*pleading*]. Father! [*A knock on the street door.*] There he is now! Father!

MOEDER KAATJE [*pleading*]. Mynheer! You'll never have

such a chance again! 'T will prove him for all time to come.

ANTJE. Father! It means my happiness for life.

MOEDER KAATJE. And yours, too, Mynheer. You know you love your child.

ANTJE [*stroking his chin*]. Father! Dearest father!

MOEDER KAATJE. Mynheer! [*Another knock.*]

MYNHEER. Well! Have it your own way! Only —

ANTJE. Yes, yes. I'll marry him if he proves true. You have my word! Yes! Yes! [*Pushing her father toward the house.*] Quick! Kaatje! Now. Take my kerchief and my jacket. [*She takes off her kerchief from her head and her satin jacket, revealing a simple dress below.*] Your apron, good Kaatje — your apron — [*Kaatje takes off her apron.*] So! So now I am your daughter, Kaatje, so! Your box of laces. Where are they?

MOEDER KAATJE [*pointing to the blue satin box on the table*]. There! The prices are all marked.

ANTJE. I'll sell them for you! And well! Guelders' and guelders' worth. You'll see! [*Another impatient knock. Tying on the apron, calling out.*] Yes! I come! I come! So — am I right — so?

MOEDER KAATJE. Yes. Yes.

ANTJE. Into the house! [*To her father by the door.*] Father! Kaatje! [*Calling out.*] I come! [*Mynheer and Kaatje go off into the house.*] I come!

[*Antje opens the door to the street.*]

[*Jonkheer Ian is standing on the sill. He is a tall thin young man of about twenty-two, dressed completely in black silk with a pointed hat. His clothes are much beribboned, he wears a broad collar and full, frilled cuffs, edged with narrow lace. The "canons" [frills] round his knees are huge, and his "petticoat breeches" very full. In face his appearance exactly corresponds to the*

portrait of a gentleman by Terborch in the National Gallery. His manner is extremely foppish and artificial.]

JONKHEER [*in a superior tone, scarcely noticing Antje*]. Ma foi! Is there no one to wait upon the door? My arm is weary with knocking.

ANTJE. I'm sorry, Mynheer. I did not hear.

JONKHEER. Is this the house of Moeder Kaatje, the lacemaker?

ANTJE. Yes, Mynheer.

JONKHEER. I am Jonkheer Ian van der Bom of Amsterdam. I have an appointment here with Mynheer Cornelis. Evidently he has not yet put in an appearance.

ANTJE. As Mynheer Jonkheer says.

JONKHEER [*annoyed*]. Late! And I'm the one to have to wait. I — a van der Bom to dance attendance on a country merchant! The situation is droll to say the least! Most droll! [*Laughs wearily.*] Ha! Ha!

ANTJE. Would the Jonkheer like to look at some of the laces meanwhile?

JONKHEER. Where is the good woman?

ANTJE. Moeder Kaatje's not here to-day. She was called away. But I can show them to the Jonkheer quite as well.

JONKHEER. I presume you're the daughter, are you?

ANTJE. As the Jonkheer says. I am the daughter.

JONKHEER. Très bien! [*Yawning.*] I may as well kill time somehow till the mighty Mynheer decides to keep his appointment — [*He goes toward the house.*]

ANTJE [*interrupting him*]. Not in there, I pray you, but here, so it please the Jonkheer. 'T is — 't is somewhat warm in the house to-day. Permit me to offer you a chair.

JONKHEER [*wearily*]. Merci! Merci! I am "mort dé

fatigue" after a horrible night at that wretched town inn of yours! Absolument mort de fatigue!

[*He sinks wearily into the chair.*]

[*Antje, behind the chair, pulls a face at him, then goes over to the table.*]

ANTJE. What kind of lace is it that the Jonkheer desires? For his wrist frills? Or his collar — or perchance a handkerchief to complete his beautiful toilet?

JONKHEER [*flattered, foolishly*]. Oh, these clothes are nothing! Only a little early morning fancy of my own! I had it made in Paris.

ANTJE. Oh, the Jonkheer has been in Paris?

JONKHEER [*with a superior tone*]. I'm only just returned. Every man of quality goes to Paris these days. What would one do for the fashions were it not for Paris? Smell that — [*He holds out his hand to Antje.*] Could one procure such heavenly odors anywhere but in Paris?

ANTJE. Wonderful!

JONKHEER. Amber! Amber with a soupçon of civet!

ANTJE. A soupçon.

JONKHEER. And these taffeta ribbons? A hundred and twenty ells in the petticoat alone. [*He rises.*] You observe? There and there and here. And the cut of the cape. Mark it close. [*He turns round.*] Where else could one find such a cut! Is it not an inspiration? A poet's vision? Ah! Paris! Paris! [*He sinks back into his chair.*] Bon Dieu, that I were back in Paris!

ANTJE. 'T is too marvelous.

JONKHEER. Of course there's one sad defect about the costume — one very sad defect indeed. You've noted it, sans doute.

ANTJE. It all seems perfection to me!

JONKHEER [*wearily*]. You would not observe it — naturally. You lack the French eye. The nose. The flaire!

Shall I tell you? Shall I whisper it? The collar! Look at the collar!

ANTJE. The collar?

JONKHEER. The lace! Painfully, absurdly narrow. Say at least — at least — [*holding out his fingers*] — this much. Quite — quite an inch and a quarter.

ANTJE. How dreadful! Yes, now I do observe it! It ruins everything.

JONKHEER. Everything!

ANTJE. But we might remedy that, I think, Mynheer. [*She opens the box of laces.*]

JONKHEER. Fi donc! Dutch lace — I? Jamais! Jamais! My dear mademoiselle — there is no lace in Holland. There never was! There never will be. All this on my ruffles is Alençon. Point d'Alençon.

ANTJE. And yet the Jonkheer comes to us for lace.

JONKHEER. Oh, but not for myself. No. Merely for a lady.

ANTJE. Oh, merely for a lady.

JONKHEER. Yes. You may as well know. I've just done Mynheer Cornelis the honor to accept the hand of his daughter.

ANTJE. Have you?

JONKHEER. Yes. You know her — no doubt?

ANTJE. Yes. I know her.

JONKHEER. Then you might possibly advise me. Which one of these — shall we say — these efforts — would take her taste? [*Looking at a piece of lace as an idea strikes him.*] Here 's not a bad piece — for Dutch work. What might be the price of this?

ANTJE. This? [*Looking at the mark.*] This you could have for sixty guelders.

JONKHEER. Sixty? Is that all? I paid two hundred louis for these ruffles! Sixty! Ridiculous! Have you nothing better?

ANTJE. Here's a better piece! Longer and wider. I'm sure Mejuffer would fancy this piece immensely.

JONKHEER. How much?

ANTJE. One hundred and eighty this.

[*Moeder Kaatje's head appears at the window, and a moment later Mynheer's. They listen intently.*]

JONKHEER [*showing her the mark*]. But 't is marked ninety.

ANTJE. A mistake! A slip! Will you have it? 'T is our very finest work. Nothing would please her better than if you took this — for a hundred and eighty. I'm confident.

JONKHEER. A large amount to give.

ANTJE. You paid two hundred for those ruffles of yours.

JONKHEER. Aye. But they were for *me* — for my own person.

ANTJE. I see. That makes a difference.

JONKHEER. A great difference.

ANTJE. Well, shall we say a hundred and seventy — to conclude the bargain?

JONKHEER. One hundred and fifty.

ANTJE. One hundred and seventy — and not a guelder less.

JONKHEER. Very well. I'll not bargain. I never do. But on one condition — that you'll answer me one little question.

ANTJE. Which is?

JONKHEER. What is she like — in truth, this Mejuffer Antje?

ANTJE. Oh, that's it?

JONKHEER. Yes. [*He takes the lace and pockets it.*]

ANTJE [*calmly*]. A hundred and seventy, we said.

JONKHEER [*as if recollecting*]. To be sure! I'm so distrait. The van der Boms are all distrait! [*He takes the money out of a silk purse.*] There. There's one hundred!

Now, twenty — forty — sixty! [*As he counts Antje catches sight of Moeder Kaatje at the window and makes signs to her.*] We said sixty, did we not?

ANTJE. Seventy.

JONKHEER. Seventy? Did we? [*With a sigh.*] Well! I never bargain. There's your money. Now tell me. Will she prove obedient? Pliable? Ready to learn?

ANTJE. To learn what?

JONKHEER. Everything. For 't is clear I shall have to take her to Paris. To have her taught — from the beginning. How to talk and how to walk. What kind of clothes to wear. What perfumes. How to dress her hair. Pauvre petite! There'll be a great deal to correct. A great deal, I fear me.

ANTJE. Oh, you fear so, do you?

JONKHEER. Oh, I know it. They say she's pretty, of course. But we all know what that means. Country taste and city taste! Ha! Ha! And yet I ask not for a miracle of beauty. Even were she merely as pretty as you, ma petite —

ANTJE. Mynheer thinks me pretty?

JONKHEER. Gentille! Très gentille for your station.

ANTJE. Oh, thank you, Mynheer.

JONKHEER. Something could be made of you, I'm confident. Something most — most passable.

[*He leans across the table trying to stroke Antje's cheek.*]

ANTJE [*avoiding his hand*]. Oh, Mynheer! What would Mejuffer Antje say!

JONKHEER. Mejuffer Antje! Think you I'll trouble my head as to what Mejuffer Antje may say? 'T is bad enough to have to marry her — Mejuffer Antje!

ANTJE. Bad enough? Then, pray why do you marry her?

JONKHEER. Oh, thou blessed simplicity! Have you never heard of the little word — debts?

ANTJE. Debts?

JONKHEER. Do you suppose that any other reason would make a gentleman of my position take up with a country merchant's daughter? And come down to a miserable town like this, and bow and bob to an old self-important fool of a father?

ANTJE [*glancing over at the window*]. Oh, her father, an old self-important fool is he?

JONKHEER. An ass. A very ass! Strutting about and braying and laying down the law to everybody! And that merely because he's succeeded in making his fortune! Which heaven alone knows how and by what means he's done it!

[*Mynheer disappears from the window, shaking with rage, and appears in the house door; slowly, step by step, he comes into the courtyard.*]

ANTJE. Sure he's come by his money honestly.

JONKHEER. Honestly? Have you ever noted his little pig eyes? And his snout of a mouth? Faces like that never make their money honestly — take my word for it!

MYNHEER [*suddenly confronting the Jonkheer*]. Oh, do they not? Do they not? Well, if they don't, at least they can give a beating honestly — you take my stick for that.

JONKHEER [*who has sprung up*]. What's this? A trap?

MYNHEER. Yes, and thank God my daughter set it. [*He points to Antje.*]

JONKHEER. Your daughter?

MYNHEER. Out with you! Out with you, you dog — or, as I live, I'll break this over your back — infamous puppy!

JONKHEER. Country boors! What a fortunate escape! Here, Mejuffer! Take your lace — give me back my money.

ANTJE. Oh, no! You bought it. 'T is yours. The money

goes to my nurse. [*She turns to Moeder Kaatje, who stands in the doorway of the house.*] Keep the lace. Trim your collar with it. Remedy the defect of your costume. [*Imitating him.*] "The sad defect. The lace, painfully, absurdly narrow. By quite — quite an inch and a quarter." Ha! Ha! Ha!

JONKHEER [*furious, breathless*]. Oh, I — [*Assuming his affected manner again.*] Barbarians! I shall go back to Paris!

[*He turns and goes off solemnly into the street. The other three burst out laughing heartily; then turn and bow solemnly to the audience.*]

CURTAIN

THE LORD'S PRAYER[1]

By FRANÇOIS COPPÉE

A New Translation by Mary Aldis

CHARACTERS

Mademoiselle Rose.
Zélee, *her housekeeper.*
Mère Blanche, *a neighbor.*
The Curé.
Jacques Le Roux.
An Officer.
Soldiers.

Time of the French Commune.

Scene: *A room on the ground floor with a door and two windows, looking out over a small sunlit garden full of rosebushes in flower.*

Through the open gate and beyond the garden, which is enclosed by a low wall, is seen a suburban lane; and in the distance, high factory chimneys.

The furniture of the room is simple; a plain sideboard, a round table, some chairs, a wicker armchair. At left, a fireplace. On the mantel, a colored plaster statue of the Virgin. At right, a roll-top desk, and a mahogany bookcase filled with books. On the walls, a large ivory crucifix and two religious pictures. Doors at right and left.

When the curtain rises, Zélee, an old woman in peas-

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ant's dress and cap, is seated in an alert attitude. Standing near her is Mère Blanche, a woman of the Paris Environs. She is hatless and carries a basket of provisions on her arm.

MÈRE BLANCHE. You are sure? He is really killed? [*Zélee nods.*] There must be some mistake. It's too terrible!

ZÉLEE. There can't be any. Listen! It was near here — in Rue Haxe — yesterday afternoon. The rebels were carrying everything before them. The Abbé was against the wall with the others — he was speaking — he raised his hand to *bless* them — and then — then — he fell — shot dead. When they took him as a hostage four days ago, Mademoiselle Rose had no fear. "We shall have him back again soon," she said. He was so good, so beloved! Oh, the brutes, to shoot him down!

[*Sound as of volley of shots is heard in the distance.*]

MÈRE BLANCHE. What is that?

ZÉLEE [*starting up*]. The soldiers from Versailles! That is right. Kill the rebels! Butcher them! It will serve them right!

MÈRE BLANCHE. Hush! You don't know what you're saying! Last night the brook ran red with blood. More than one innocent man was killed.

ZÉLEE. And who more innocent than my poor master — so strong, so tender, a true father to his people — keeping nothing for himself, giving away all that he had! — To kill him! — When your passions are aroused, you Parisians are like wild beasts! It's "For the Commune," is it? It's the lust to kill!

MÈRE BLANCHE. Where is Mademoiselle Rose? She worshipped her brother.

ZÉLEE. At first she did not say a word. I was frightened. I thought she was going mad, and then — she cried out against Paris. "The horror, the horror!" At last,

she dropped off to sleep in his armchair. [*Points towards right.*] Just now in her sleep, I heard her grind her teeth.

MÈRE BLANCHE. Poor girl!

ZÉLEE. I came to them fifteen years ago. The Abbé was a boy of ten and Mademoiselle Rose only eighteen — so pretty, so young, so tender of little Jean! Their father and mother were dead — they were alone — the two young things. He was always reading. She was so proud when he brought home prizes from school. Then he went away to the seminary. We were so lonely! A rich farmer wanted to marry her, but she said she must take care of little Jean. "When he is a priest," she said, "I will keep his house." And she kept her word. And now he is dead and she is alone! [*Zélee bursts into sobs.*]

[*The voice of Mademoiselle Rose comes from the room beyond.*]

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. Zélee!

ZÉLEE. She is awake. You had better go. She must not talk.

MÈRE BLANCHE. Of course. Good-night. God keep you.

[*Exit Mère Blanche at back. After a moment enter Mademoiselle Rose from right, unsteadily. Zélee goes to her tenderly and supports her to a chair.*]

ZÉLEE. You are better? Have you slept?

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. Yes — but the dreams! The row of prisoners against the wall, the crack of the guns — they fall quickly, one after another. I can't blot it out. [*Zélee brings water which she drinks eagerly.*] I heard the guns in my sleep. Are they fighting still?

ZÉLEE. No, they say the last rebels were captured at Père la Chaise.

MADEMOISELLE ROSE [*pointing to the garden*]. See how the roses drop their petals. Look at the sunshine on the grass; the birds are singing. And my brother, my

brother is dead! [*She rocks herself to and fro.*] How did you know the rebels were taken?

ZÉLEE. Mère Blanche told me. She has just gone.

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. The woman who lives at the end of the street? My brother was good to her.

ZÉLEE. Monsieur the Curé has been here. I said you were asleep. He promised to return.

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. I can't see him.

ZÉLEE. Mademoiselle! Think again. He loved Abbé Jean. They were friends. It is his right to come.

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. Oh, well, let him come; but if he dares try to comfort me, if he talks about resignation, I can't bear it. I won't be told about the justice and goodness of God! I won't! Zélee, I shall live for a long, long time. I am very strong. The days and the weeks and the years will follow each other. The little clock there will keep on ticking them off, one after another, over and over and over, until I am an old woman. And always I'll be here. Animals that are no longer of use they kill. What am I to do now? They have taken away from me my child, my little brother. I am no longer of use. What can be done with me? If I could avenge his death, bring his murderers to justice! But I am helpless! And God lets such things be! I tell you, if God exists, He is false or He is powerless. He lets an innocent man die so! I was a fool to believe in Him, in His goodness, His mercy. Let them not talk to me of Heaven — there is no God!

[*While she has been speaking the Curé, an old white-haired priest, has come in. He stops at the threshold of the open dooor, not hearing Mademoiselle Rose's last words. She turns quickly.*]

ZÉLEE. It is the Curé. [*Zélee goes out.*]

[*The Curé comes towards Mademoiselle Rose.*]

THE CURÉ. My poor child, my poor, poor child!

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. Thank you for coming, Monsieur le Curé; but can we not talk — a little later? You loved him, I know. I do not wish to be unkind — only I can't speak of it. I can't! Leave me alone, I beg of you.

THE CURÉ. If I am unwelcome, I will go, but — a holy priest of God has submitted to martyrdom. I wish to say to you one word. Be comforted — your brother is with the saints of God. He is in Heaven.

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. Ah, I was waiting for that! You say my brother is in Heaven! I say he is in the Rue Haxe, bloody, horrible, pierced with gunshots — that I can see. I cannot see him in Heaven with a palm in his hand among your saints! I tell you those ghouls who killed him, who threw his body into a pit and covered him with clay and stones destroyed my faith in Heaven. Do you understand now? I suppose you think it is shining, your Heaven, calm and blue and serene, while Paris is burning, while the pavements are red and slippery with blood. Sodom and Gomorrah are come again. But he was good, my brother. What has he done that he should be part of that? Your Heaven, I don't believe in it! I defy God! I have said it. Curse me if you will.

THE CURÉ. My child, I weep for you. What you say does not frighten me. God will forgive you when you ask His forgiveness — as you will ask it; but in the holiness with which he has been invested, in his glory among the angels, your brother's heart is rent by the blasphemies of his unhappy sister.

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. Oh, forgive me! I am beside myself. But if he is in Paradise, as you say, how can I live on here? When he was little, I cared for him; when he became a priest, noble and strong, I looked up to him as to a father. I served him — I took care of him — he took no thought for himself. Every evening he would

read — here — by this lamp — and I would sew near him. Often we would both speak at the same moment of the same thing, so close were our thoughts. For his sake I refused to marry. When he was absent I stitched my thoughts of him into the garments I made for him; and I was happy. I owe him everything, and now! My grief is precious to me, — a cruel joy. My last breath will be to mourn for him — my brother.

THE CURÉ. Poor, broken heart! Your tears will water a green spot in the desert of your empty future. My child, guard your suffering in your heart, but keep always in your mind the knowledge that he knows all you think, all you do. I speak now not as the Curé, but as an old man who has seen life and loves you. I feel the spirit of your brother hovering near us. It is as if he said: "Weep if you must, my sister, your tears are dear to me; but weep with courage. Hold ever in your heart the memory of former days, and the hope of those to come. Live nobly. I will watch over you. Read aloud the Holy Book, and as you hear the divine words you will think that you hear the echo of my voice. When you succor those unfortunate ones whom I have loved, you will feel the pressure of my hand in their handclasp. Travel then, the length of the way marked out for you. I, your invisible guide, will help you bear your burden of sorrow. Be not troubled that the hour is afar off when the blessed dawn of your immortal day shall break in holy light upon your vision. Be patient to the end."

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. Oh, Monsieur le Curé, if it were true! But it is not true! Oh, why cannot I die too?

[*Firing is heard again in the distance.*]

THE CURÉ. They are still fighting.

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. What 's that? Oh, yes, I remember, the Commune is beaten. The rebels are killed. [*With a hoarse triumphant cry.*] My brother is avenged!

THE CURÉ. Who knows who is killed? There may be many who are innocent.

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. How can you pity them? They are murderers! [*More shots are heard.*] Do you hear that? The sound of the guns makes me glad. I am mad for vengeance! If they need any one to excite the soldiers, to shoot down the rebels, let them come to me, I am ready!

THE CURÉ. And it is his sister who says this!

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. Can't you understand? My brother — my brother was killed! Do you hear? Shot down after all the years of patient devoted self-sacrifice! The moment their passions are aroused, they shoot him down. Have they souls? Look! [*She opens a cupboard and takes out a black cassock and a priest's round hat.*] See how worn and shabby these are. I hid them so that he might get new ones. But when I told him, he looked at me with his tender smile. "Rose," he said, "I have just been to see the Duvals. There are five mouths to feed now, and another coming. Sister Rose, please give me back my old clothes. You will mend them?" And four days later he was in prison as a hostage, and there was no one to pay his ransom! And you stand there and bid me remember to "pardon"! You try to rock my bitterness to sleep with your pity — but th sound of those muskets firing upon traitors calls to me. I glory in their punishment!

THE CURÉ [*sternly*]. If I thought but of the dignity due the office I hold, I should pass the threshold of that door and never return. I should pronounce denunciation upon a rebellious soul and go away. But the God whom you defy is the same God your brother worshiped. I dare to affirm that at the moment of his death your brother raised his hand in blessing and in supplication for pardon: "Father, forgive them, they know not what

they do." Hate, curse, denounce, if you must, unhappy woman that you are. But remember that if your brother could speak to those who caused his death, it would be in pity for their blindness and in forgiveness for their cruelty. [*Goes towards the door.*] Good-bye.

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. My brother was a saint, and I am but a woman. What is to become of me? What shall I do?

THE CURÉ. Pray. [*Exit slowly, leaving the door open.*]

MADEMOISELLE ROSE [*alone*]. He said to pray. My heart is full of hatred. I can never pray again. [*She takes her rosary and after a moment begins haltingly:*] Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy — thy — will — be done — Oh, I can't! — Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses — [*pause*] as we forgive those who trespass against us — forgive! forgive whom? Those murderers? No! I will *never* forgive them — by the beads of this rosary — [*She gazes at the rosary, then throws it upon the table.*] He said my brother forgave them. I will never, never forgive them!

[*At this moment a bareheaded, disheveled man wearing the uniform of a Communist enters quickly at the back by the gate into the garden. Before closing the gate, he looks quickly in either direction, then rapidly crosses the little garden and comes into the room, shutting the door behind him.*]

JACQUES LE ROUX. At last, shelter!

[*Mademoiselle Rose gives a cry of anger and surprise.*]

JACQUES LE ROUX. For the love of God, let me stay!

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. A rebel, in my house!

JACQUES LE ROUX. I am a fugitive. They are tracking me to my death as they track a hunted animal. If

they take me they will shoot me against the wall. I saw your garden gate. You will hide me? Give me a corner where I can lie hid for one day, only one. I promise to go to-morrow. Turn me out now, and I am lost. You love some man — father, son, husband, brother! I implore you, save my life in the name of the man you love!

MADEMOISELLE ROSE [*slowly*]. You ask that I save you "in the name of the man I love." Know, then, I had a brother whom I loved. He was shot yesterday, against a wall — the Abbé Morel!

JACQUES LE ROUX. I am lost. Let me go!

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. You have said it. Lost! Yes, go forth and I will go too. I will follow you to the street and I will cry to the crowd, "There is the assassin!"

JACQUES LE ROUX. I am no assassin. I fought as others fought. I am innocent of crime. Have mercy!

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. You are all murderers. How dare you ask for mercy? [*She takes up the cassock.*] Look at this coat my brother wore because he gave away all his money to you — you, his murderers! And you pray to me for mercy!

JACQUES LE ROUX. I see I cannot touch you. You are too cruel. Since you rejoice that I am to die, I will tell you who I am. Jacques Le Roux, member of the Commune.

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. You!

JACQUES LE ROUX. I voted against the Revolution. I opposed the shooting of hostages. Still, I have fought against the Government. I am not a believer, yet I reverence and trust those who worship God. Now I find what the goodness of a Christian woman means. You have no pity, you have no heart. How dare you pretend to worship the memory of Christ, you who will

not forgive a man who is innocent — you, who will deliver up to his death a hunted fugitive who begs you for an asylum!

ZÉLEE [*enters quickly*]. Mademoiselle Rose! Mademoiselle Rose! Soldiers are here to search the house. [*She sees Jacques and stifles a cry of surprise.*]

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. Tell them I will come. Go. [*Exit Zélee.*] — He said my brother forgave all!

JACQUES LE ROUX [*looking at her*]. There is nothing for it, then, but death. Well, if it 's my fate —

[*She takes the cassock and hat from the chair and holds them out to Jacques. With the other hand she opens a door at the right, motioning him to a room within.*]

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. Go in there. Put them on. [*A sound of loud knocking is heard at the gate.*] Go quickly! [*She makes an imperious gesture, and Jacques takes the garments from her and obeys. Mademoiselle Rose closes the door and stands by it.*] Have I done as you would wish, my brother? Oh, my beloved, my beloved! Give me some sign that I have done your will!

[*An officer, followed by several soldiers, enters.*]

OFFICER. Madam, your pardon! One of the rebels is concealed somewhere in this street — a leader — we must find him. Will you answer my questions or shall we search the house? It will go hard with you if he is found here.

MADEMOISELLE ROSE. Certainly I will answer your questions. There is no one here. Look if you choose. [*The officer glances about, sees the image of the Virgin, and the pictures, and steps back embarrassed.*] Do you wish proofs? Indeed, I have no sympathy with rebels. [*At this moment Jacques Le Roux in cassock and hat appears at the door on the right, stopping as if in amazement as*

he perceives the soldiers.] I live here alone with my brother — ah, here he is.

[*Officer respectfully touches his cap to the supposed priest.*]

OFFICER. Pardon, Monsieur Abbé! Monsieur — Madam. [*To his soldiers.*] March!

[*Exit, back, followed by soldiers.*]

JACQUES LE ROUX [*extending his hand to Mademoiselle Rose*]. My children! My wife!

MADEMOISELLE ROSE [*holding up her hand to silence him*]. It was for him, my brother, You wear his cassock. You are safe. Go. [*She points towards the door. Jacques Le Roux, uncovering his head, goes slowly out. Mademoiselle Rose, when alone, takes up the rosary from the table, pressing it to her lips, then falls upon her knees.*] Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

CURTAIN

THE COTTAGE ON THE MOOR[1]

By E. E. SMITH and D. L. IRELAND

PERSONS IN THE PLAY

An Old Man.
His Grandson.
A Royalist Officer.
A Sergeant and a Trooper of the Roundheads.

Time: *Evening of the 22nd of May in the year 1660.*

Scene: *A cottage on a lonely moor in the North of England. At the back of the cottage there is a door, with heavy bolts, to the left; and a window, open, to the right, with the shutters thrown back; against the left wall there is a cupboard with shelves, and a small table with a lighted lantern on it; in the right wall, in front, is a second door, open; in the center of the room is a table laid for supper, with two lighted candles on it, and a chair at each end.*

The Boy is waiting impatiently, munching a piece of bread. Outside the open door to the right the old man is heard chopping wood.

Boy. Are you coming, grandfather? I'm getting hungry.

Grandfather [*outside*]. Is supper ready yet?

Boy. Yes, it 's been ready for hours and hours. I'm *so* hungry.

Grandfather. All right: I'm coming. [*The old man comes in carrying an axe, and with a bundle of firewood*

[1] From *Perse Playbooks, No. 1, Dramatic Work by the boys of the Perse School, Cambridge (England)*. Reprinted by courtesy of the Headmaster, Dr. W. H. D. Rouse. Inquiries regarding the acting rights may be addressed to Hanson Hart Webster, 2 Park St., Boston.

under his arm, which he throws down in a corner. He limps slightly.] Well, what have you got for me, to-night? [*He sits down to the table wearily.*] My leg's bad again with all this walking. What have you been doing all day? Did you go out at all the time I was away? [*They begin their meal.*]

BOY. I went to the top of the hill.

GRANDFATHER. Tell me, did you see anything on the moor?

BOY. Yes, I did. Away on the skyline once I saw some horsemen riding along.

GRANDFATHER. Which way? Where did you see them?

BOY. Over there.

[*He points over his shoulder with his spoon.*]

GRANDFATHER. Which way were they going?

BOY. I don't know. I just saw them for a moment, against the sky. I wonder what they're doing there.

GRANDFATHER [*with sudden fury*]. I know who they are — curse them, they're Roundheads. Yes, listen. I was over the border to-day, and they're saying in Applebie that the Roundheads are somewhere near. A shepherd came upon them last night in the hills to the south, sitting round their camp-fire. He saw by the light of their fire that they were Roundheads. It's queer that they should come so near the border, when the King's men are gathering in Applebie.

BOY. What are *they* doing there?

GRANDFATHER [*keeping something back*]. Oh — they're making ready — who knows what may happen in a week's time!

BOY. Oh, I wish I could go and see them drilling in Applebie. . . . [*He sidles to the door, back.*]

GRANDFATHER [*picking up his pipe from the table*]. Where are you going?

BOY. I'm only going outside.

GRANDFATHER. No, no — not to-night. Besides, who's going to light my pipe for me?

BOY [*reluctantly*]. Oh, all right.

[*He lights a spill from the candle and brings it to the old man.*]

GRANDFATHER [*while his pipe is being lighted*]. I don't want the Roundheads to get you too.

BOY. I was n't going far, grandfather.

GRANDFATHER. Come, now, bolt the door, and shut the window. And now come here. I've got something to tell you — a great secret!

BOY [*still rather sulky*]. What?

GRANDFATHER. Don't you remember me telling you when the King went away, that some day he would come back? [*The Boy nods.*] Well, I was right. Why do you think the soldiers are drilling?

BOY. Oh! I know now; the King is coming back. You told me ever so long ago he would come back, and we should be fighting again, and old Cromwell would be beaten.

GRANDFATHER. Yes, before the week is over the King will have landed.

BOY [*excitedly*]. Will there be a fight? What will you do, grandfather?

GRANDFATHER. My fighting days are over — and yours are not begun. We won't be much use, I'm afraid.

BOY. Do you think they'll come here?

GRANDFATHER. I don't believe they would come so near the border, but if they do, we're ready for them — you and I! If you'll help me we'll get down the swords and the pistol, and clean them up.

[*The Boy fetches the swords and the pistol, which the old man begins to polish with a rag.*]

GRANDFATHER [*squinting down the barrel, to himself*]. Yes, we're ready for them.

BOY. Did you ever shoot any one with that pistol, grandfather?

GRANDFATHER. Yes, once.

BOY. Was that when father was killed? [*A pause.*]

GRANDFATHER. That was a day . . .

[*He is thinking of old times, and becomes more and more interested in his story; while the Boy, who has heard it many a time before, plays unconcernedly with the pistol, trying to charge it.*]

GRANDFATHER. They were out on the moor, a mere handful, riding over the hill to look for the Roundheads, and your father was in command. They came on them suddenly, and had to ride for it to the border, for they had n't thought to find so many. His men came down the slope and made for safety; but your father turned on to the road to tell us here to keep within doors until our men had rallied over the border. He said good-bye, and was mounting his horse on the road, when I heard a shot from the hillside. He swayed in the saddle, and before I could get to him he had fallen. I ran out, and in the same moment I heard the clatter of hoofs on the road, and there was a Roundhead, with a smoking pistol in his hand, riding down upon us. I ran to your father's horse, and snatched this pistol from the holster: as I did so the Roundhead turned off the road on to the moor. It was a long shot, but I felt sure of myself, and my hand was steady. . . . He slipped down from the saddle, but his foot caught in the stirrup, and he was dragged along —

BOY. Grandfather, do show me how to charge a pistol properly. I can never put the powder in without spilling it. And show me how to make a wad, and how to mend the priming — just everything about a pistol.

GRANDFATHER [*resignedly*]. Well, well — bring me the powder horn; and you'll find some wadding in the cupboard. [*The Boy brings them.*] The ramrod and the bullets are in the box on the shelf.

[*He loads the pistol while the Boy watches.*]

BOY. No, let me do it — you're doing it all yourself.

[*He takes the pistol and tries to load it.*]

GRANDFATHER [*laughing at him*]. Ah ha! You can't do it, you see. There 's some use for us old men after all.

BOY [*indignantly*]. I tell you I can, if you let me alone. Let me try again, grandfather.

GRANDFATHER. No, no — if you take all night to load it, the Roundheads will be on us before you're ready!

BOY. Well, let me fire it off, then —

GRANDFATHER. What? Do you want to blow the house down? Besides, some one might hear it

BOY [*despairingly*]. Let me aim it, then? I tell you what — I'll aim at that jug, and you tell me if I'm doing it right.

GRANDFATHER. Very well, then.

[*The Boy aims at a jug on the cupboard: he is standing between his grandfather's knees; the old man steadies his hand. A loud knocking is heard at the door. The old man snatches up a sword. A pause.*]

GRANDFATHER. Keep back, keep back: don't show yourself yet. [*He looks cautiously through the window.*] It 's a wounded man.

BOY [*in an excited whisper*]. Grandfather, is it a Roundhead?

GRANDFATHER. Roundhead or not, I'm going to open the door.

[*He opens it: the Boy is covering the entrance with the pistol. A wounded Royalist officer staggers in, and leans against the doorway.*]

ROYALIST. God save King Charles!

GRANDFATHER. Look out! He 's going to fall — Quick! Shut the door and bolt it. [*They half drag him to the chair at the table. The Boy closes the door; the old man fetches a flask from the cupboard, and revives the wounded man.*] He 's coming round now. Look — he 's been

shot in the shoulder. This is the Roundheads' work; they must be somewhere near.

ROYALIST [*half-conscious, struggling with the old man*]. Let me go — you have n't got me yet — curse you, let go!

BOY. Hold him, grandfather, till I get a bullet in the pistol!

GRANDFATHER. Steady, steady: we're King's men here.

ROYALIST [*faintly*]. Where am I? I can't remember anything.

GRANDFATHER. [*A sudden fear strikes him.*] Were you seen coming here?

ROYALIST. They must have seen me. Ah — I begin to remember: it was bright moonlight . . .

BOY. Oh, we *must* hide him!

GRANDFATHER. Hide him? How can we hide him? [*A pause: then grimly.*] We must fight for it.

ROYALIST. They must be near now. I must get on. I tell you I must get to the border. Where 's my pistol? [*He tries to stand up.*] My shoulder! I remember now. I was riding up the other side of the ridge, and when I got to the top the moon came out from behind a cloud. Suddenly I heard two shots from the moor on my left. My horse bolted. There was a stinging pain in my shoulder, and I felt faint. I saw this cottage below me, and made for it. I was quite near when my horse dropped. I rolled clear, and dragged myself to the door. Then I found myself in here. But hurry — they may be on us any minute.

GRANDFATHER. Stop! Were they on horse or foot?

ROYALIST. I saw no horses.

GRANDFATHER [*with sudden decision, to the Boy*]. You go out to the furze bushes, and watch them coming down the hill. Wait till they get to the big white stone; then whistle twice, and we'll get ready for them.

ROYALIST. No — wait: let me go now. I might get safely away: I don't want to get you into danger.

GRANDFATHER. You 'd drop, boy, before you had gone far. Besides —

BOY. May I come back and use the pistol?

GRANDFATHER. No — you must get across the border as soon as you can. Go to Sergeant Grant in Applebie: you 'll be safest there. Run along, and don't get caught. Good-bye. [*He kisses the Boy.*] He 'll show you the soldiers drilling, if you ask him.

BOY [*looking out of door*]. It 's all quiet. Are you coming soon, grandfather?

GRANDFATHER. Perhaps . . .

[*The Royalist goes to kiss the Boy, who holds back indignantly: the Royalist shakes hands with him, smiling.*]

ROYALIST. Good-bye, and good luck! [*The Boy goes out by the door, right.*] We 'd better do what we can. Help me with the table.

[*They move the center table against the door, right. The old man lays a sword on the table and hands another to the officer. He takes the pistol himself and walks about the room: the young man is sitting at the table facing the window.*]

GRANDFATHER [*uneasily*]. I wonder if the moon is shining: the boy might be seen, as you were. I'll put out the light and have a look from the window. [*He muffles the lantern: the young man blows out the candles. The old man throws back the shutters and looks out.*] There 's a bright moon shining; every shadow looks like a man. He must be nearly there now. Ssh! It 's all quiet out there. He must be in the heather now, for I can't hear anything.

ROYALIST [*rising*]. Shut the window again: with that moon shining they might get a long shot from the hill.

[*The old man shuts and bars the window. The officer unmuffles the lantern.*]

GRANDFATHER. No, I don't think they could. There 's little

to be seen from this window: that's why I sent out the boy. [*His fear grows on him, in spite of himself.*] Do you think I could have — no — he can't be in danger: he knows every path on the moor. And, besides, I was thinking — I could n't help thinking —

ROYALIST. Well?

GRANDFATHER [*with deep feeling*]. I'll tell you. It 's more than ten years ago now, and we were living in the cottage then, the boy and I, as we're living now. And one day his father was shot by those devils out there on the road: and ever since then — Oh! do you think I could risk it again?

[*He sits down at the table and bows his head in his hands.*]

ROYALIST. No, no — you were quite right. I might have gone myself, but it was better to get the boy away — and this cursed shoulder: — I'm as weak as a girl.

GRANDFATHER. Yes, it would n't do for us to be surprised here, like rats in a trap.

ROYALIST. Would n't you rather have us taken here, than the boy in danger? If the worst came to the worst, could n't we draw them on us? He'd get away safe enough then.

GRANDFATHER [*hopefully*]. Yes, yes — he 's safe, I'm sure he 's safe. He knows how to keep out of sight. Why, he plays in the bracken all day, and many 's the time I've not been able to find him.

ROYALIST. Come, then, don't let 's think of it any more. Why, they may never have tracked me after all. [*The young man lights a spill at the lantern, and lights one of the candles. A whistle is heard; then, after a pause, a shot.*] What 's that?

GRANDFATHER. Hush! [*He crosses to the door at back; the officer tries to hold him.*] Let me alone! I must go to him.

ROYALIST [*pointing to door, right*]. If you must, go this way, or they'll see you.

GRANDFATHER. What do I care? The boy may be — I must go.

[*He goes to the door, right, and pushes aside the table.*]

ROYALIST. What are you going to do if he is safe?

GRANDFATHER. Oh, we'll slip past them in the dark, and get to the border, where they can't follow us. [*He unbolts the door.*]

ROYALIST [*handing him the pistol*]. Here, you've forgotten this. [*A pause.*]

GRANDFATHER [*slowly*]. And you?

ROYALIST. What good is a wounded man? I must take my chance.

GRANDFATHER. But I can't leave you . . .

ROYALIST. They may not come here after all. But you must hurry: the boy —

GRANDFATHER. Good-bye.

[*They shake hands, and he goes out. The officer closes the door behind him: then, feeling faint, he sits down.*]

ROYALIST. I should have gone. [*He tries to rise, but sinks back with a groan.*] What shall I do if they come? [*He looks round for a weapon.*] Nothing; he has taken the pistol. If they find me here unarmed — God help me! What could I do? I had to stay. . . . He must have found the boy by now. They might be caught before they got to the border — an old man and a boy. I must look. [*He muffles the lantern, and blows out the candle.*] [*At the window.*] Ah, that 's bad: there 's the moon; he'll be seen . . . What 's that? Something black moving down the hill: there was a flash. A musket barrel. They 're coming this way, curse them. [*A shout is heard from the hillside.*] They 've stopped. They must have seen him. If only I had a pistol. [*He rushes to the door and stumbles.*] No use. I can't do it. Another minute and they'll be caught.

[*A sudden thought strikes him. He unmuffles the lantern, opens the window, leans out with the light on his face, and shouts. A shot breaks the window: he swings the shutters to. A noise is heard on the road outside: the Roundheads beat on the door at back. He crosses to the door right, leans against it, and tries to drag the table in front. He gradually slips to the floor. The door is burst in, and a Trooper stumbles over the body, followed by a Sergeant.*]

TROOPER. Here he is. Bring over the lantern.

[*The Sergeant fetches the lantern.*]

SERGEANT [*kneeling over the body*]. Dead.

TROOPER. Shot in the throat. So he did n't get away the second time. What was the fool doing at the window? You'd think he wanted to get himself shot.

[*The Sergeant takes the lantern and searches the room.*]

TROOPER [*to the dead man*]. Well, you found the right man, anyhow! It's seldom I miss.

SERGEANT. There 's precious little here. [*Sees the bottle on the table.*] Hullo! [*He holds it to the lantern, then throws it down.*] Empty: trust a King's man for that!

TROOPER. Pity I missed the other two.

SERGEANT. No time to follow them now: they'll be over the border, and we're not safe a minute here. [*He puts the lantern down again by the dead man's head.*] What shall we do with this? [*He kicks the body.*]

TROOPER. Let him wait there till King Charles comes!

[*They go out laughing, and pass round by the window. The Sergeant is heard giving the order to march. The tramp of feet dies away along the road.*]

CURTAIN

SOLEMN PRIDE [1]

By GEORGE ROSS LEIGHTON

CHARACTERS

Mrs. Bixby.
Mrs. Issacs.
Mrs. Griswold.
Miss Carroll.
Mrs. Brewster.
Miss Abbot.
Molly Harmon.
Mrs. Gregory.
Sarah Gregory.

Scenic Locale: Beacon, Massachusetts. A New England Village.
Time: *April 10, 1865.*

Scene: *The sitting-room of Mrs. Brewster on a sunny spring afternoon, April 10, 1865. The room is pleasantly furnished and shows taste and prosperous circumstances. A door on the right opens into a small vestibule which in turn opens into the street. A door on the left leads to other rooms in the house. A fireplace, center, with a small blaze on the hearth. Old clock and candlesticks on the mantel. A couple of well-executed oil portraits on the walls. Several daguerreotypes in evidence. A long comfortable sofa is against the wall, left. Flat-top desk against the wall, right. Rolls of muslin, bandages, little piles of lint, and sewing paraphernalia are seen about the room. Mrs. Brewster is*

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sewing before the fire. She is a woman of perhaps fifty, well-dressed, pleasant, and possessing grace and charm of manner. Opposite her, in a straight-back, cane-seated chair is Miss Carroll, knitting in silence. Miss Carroll is the sole surviving member of a family of colonial forbears plus money, and the fact that she is aware of both is apparent when one meets her. She is very thin, is dressed in a gown of steel-colored silk, with wide sweeping crinoline and tiny bodice. She wears a high, tortoise-shell comb. A mannerism to which she is addicted is a slight sniff indicating extreme disapproval. She and Mrs. Brewster are engaged in sewing and knitting supplies for the Union Army and are at the present time awaiting the arrival of their neighbors.

MRS. BREWSTER. Well, Molly Harmon is home with great tales of the Sanitary Fair. She says that New York almost forgot the War while it was on and declares that she never danced so much in her life.

MISS CARROLL [*sniff*]. Hm-m, yes, I dare say. I cannot for the life of me see how Judge Harmon can allow his daughter to stoop to such dissipation. When we are all going without things on account of the War, she has the assurance and face to come home with a Saratoga trunk full of gewgaws for which she has absolutely no use. And they say the way she carried on with that strange army captain was disgraceful. I, for one, am out of patience with her.

MRS. BREWSTER. Oh, I don't know. We all love fun when we're young and I really think the trip did Molly good. Why, when she got back from nursing at Washington she was pale and worn out. She certainly has deserved a little holiday.

MISS CARROLL. Well, all I can say is, that I think it was a waste of money. Look at that hat she brought back, with the silver lace. Why, she actually admits that

she paid twenty-five dollars for it. I never paid more than fifteen dollars for a hat in my life.

MRS. BREWSTER. But I think that the hat becomes her amazingly.

MISS CARROLL. I think I look pretty well in my own. It's an A. T. Stewart hat and I paid nine-fifty for it.

MRS. BREWSTER. I do think you look very well in it, Miss Carroll.

MISS CARROLL [*mollified*]. Well, mmf — mmf, I'm sure I'm glad you like it.

MRS. BREWSTER. I think it's quite stunning. [*Knocking at outer door.*] Please excuse me a moment, Miss Carroll, while I let the ladies in.

[*Mrs. Brewster opens the vestibule door and is presently heard opening the outside door and welcoming visitors. While she is out, Miss Carroll settles her comb, pats her hair, and arranges her skirts and seats herself firmly in her chair, only to rise again on the entrance of Mrs. Issacs and Mrs. Griswold. Mrs. Issacs is a middle-aged mother of a large family, stout and capable. Mrs. Griswold is a young woman of perhaps thirty, brisk and active. Miss Carroll from her lofty social eminence almost condescendingly greets the arrivals.*]

MRS. ISSACS. I am sorry, Mrs. Brewster, that I am late, but I've been doing the first of my canning, and rhubarb can't be left half done, very well.

MRS. BREWSTER. I'm glad you waited and finished. Did it turn out well?

MRS. ISSACS. Hm-mm, well, yes. I put up thirty quarts. Biggest mess of rhubarb that I ever made.

MISS CARROLL [*knitting*]. I sometimes get a rhubarb marmalade at Delmonico's with orange and lemon peel. They import it from Frasquati's in Paris. Ninety cents a pint, I think, is what I pay.

MRS. ISSACS. That certainly is interesting, though of course I know very little about foreign things of that sort.

[*Mrs. Griswold, who with Mrs. Brewster has been looking over some sewing, now speaks.*]

MRS. GRISWOLD. Mrs. Issacs, I think you'd better work on these hospital shirts, if you don't care. We ought to get them out by the end of the week. They say hospital supplies with Sherman's Army are dangerously low.

MRS. ISSACS [*putting on her spectacles*]. Just as well do shirts as not. Have you decided to put on a pocket?

MRS. GRISWOLD. Yes. It takes more cloth and time, but I think it's worth it.

MRS. ISSACS. Oh, my, yes. It gives you a place for your handkerchief. You're always losing it when you put it under your pillow. How many buttons, Mrs. Griswold?

MRS. GRISWOLD. Five.

MRS. ISSACS. All right. Now, if you will hand me those scissors, I'm fixed.

[*She draws her chair up to the fire and commences to sew. Mrs. Griswold is industriously rolling bandages, Mrs. Brewster is on the sofa sorting pieces of cloth. There is a sharp rap on the door, and presently Miss Abbot, the village gossip, is admitted. She is dressed in a shiny gown of a violent green with many flounces, each flounce edged with white to make the effect more startling. She wears a bird's-nest coiffure and a hat about the size of a fifty-cent piece. She speaks in rather a high nasal voice.*]

MISS ABBOT. I did n't know that it was sewing day for the soldiers or I would n't have come in to bother you.

MRS. BREWSTER. No trouble at all, Lavinia. You're welcome. Here, you can pick some lint out of this old linen duster. We have n't a bit of lint for this week's box.

MISS ABBOT [*hastily*]. No, thanks. I have a fearful headache and would rather not this afternoon. It was rather cool outside, so I thought I'd drop in for a chat before your fire.

MRS. BREWSTER [*calmly*]. To be sure. Take off your things and sit down. You can entertain us. What is the latest news from the front?

MISS ABBOT. Why, they say Johnston can't hold out much longer and — oh, say — have you seen Mame Ruggles's new parasol? They say she got it because Joe Simpkins is going with her now; but then you never can tell; and you remember that young man — Howell was his name — that taught rhetoric in the academy, two years ago? Well, he's in prison for forgery [*gasp*] — Hester Townley told me; he boarded at their house and she ought to know.

MRS. BREWSTER. Have you seen Molly Harmon?

MISS ABBOT. Yes, I have. Did you hear about her affair with that army officer in the city? They say he had a wife and two children. Is n't it scandalous? Somehow I never thought it of Molly.

MRS. ISSACS. My husband met him in the army and knows him quite well. He is just about John's age, fifty-four. He lost a leg at Cold Harbor. [*Glancing over her glasses at Miss Abbot.*] Did you hear whether Molly danced with him, Miss Abbot?

MISS ABBOT [*calling off her dogs in a crestfallen way*]. Are you sure it's the same man?

MRS. ISSACS. Perfectly. Molly met his wife at the fair and she invited Molly to their house to tea.

MISS ABBOT [*disgustedly*]. Well, I never.

MRS. GRISWOLD. Well, to go back to our original topic, what news from the front? I have n't had a word from Dr. Griswold for weeks. Of course he was very busy when the march for Savannah began and the medical

corps was hurried all the time, but I can't understand why some word has n't gotten through. Really I'm beginning to worry.

MRS. BREWSTER. Well, I hardly think you need feel disturbed. Just imagine what the mail service from Georgia must be, the way the armies are chasing each other about. Dear, I hope peace will come soon. None of us hardly have suffered at all, but when I think of poor Mrs. Bixby, with just one son left and he's with Grant. Every day's mail she fears will bring word of his having been killed in action. But how bravely she does bear it all, not a single murmur.

MRS. ISSACS. I know it. It makes me ashamed of myself for the complaining I did to other people about John and the two boys in the army. And really they did n't have a hard time at all, in comparison to what the Bixby boys went through and died in.

MISS CARROLL. Mrs. Griswold, will you please hand me that hank of yarn? Thank you. [*She hangs the hank over the back of a chair and commences to wind a ball of yarn.*] I never really understood what war meant until the day that the news came that Arthur Bixby had been killed at Chancellorsville. You remember we were coming out of church when they handed the telegram to her. And how quietly she opened the envelope and how still she stood on the steps, looking down at the flag floating in the square. He was the third son to go. How I longed that I might have had a son to send as I watched that woman. I felt so useless and worthless and as though my name, that shone so brightly in '76 and 1812, was tarnished and rusty, and that I had no right to be a Carroll. Ah, well, it 's too late now, and the best I can do is to knit a little and let that suffice.

[*The others have been listening, rather surprised, for no one has ever known Miss Carroll to have*

any interest in any one save herself or to have any feelings about the War at all. There is a silence, and then Miss Abbot begins volubly.]

MISS ABBOT. It is sad. I've felt for Mrs. Bixby. I took her a glass of jelly once, but, do you know, I think that she ought to wear mourning. I don't think that she should wear light dresses and colors at this time. It does n't look well.

MRS. BREWSTER [*quietly*]. I think it was a brave and lovable thing to do. She told me the week after Gettysburg that as she had given her sons to fight, she had no right in the hard time of the War to burden other people with her griefs and that she ought to help as much as any one to keep things cheerful. But it has worn on her, one can see that, her face is thin and worn from her constant anxiety. And of course now her whole thought is on Bob, her last remaining and her youngest.

[*More knocking, and presently Molly Harmon enters with Mrs. Gregory. Molly is about twenty-two or so, jolly and good-looking. She is an only child and is a trifle indulged, but she is fair and square and nursed for two whole years at Washington. Mrs. Gregory is a little woman, in mourning, and very quiet.*]

MOLLY. Hello! How are you all? Good afternoon, Mrs. Brewster. How do you do, Miss Abbot? I don't think I've seen you since I got back. Oh, Mrs. Issacs, I do want to thank you so much for the lovely pie you sent over while I was away. Father has been dreaming and talking about it ever since. He declares it 's the best pie crust he 's ever tasted.

MRS. ISSACS [*smiling*]. I use a little less fat than most. I'm glad he enjoyed it. We had just a few greenings left. They 're nice for late pies if they don't turn mealy.

MRS. BREWSTER. Do sit down, both of you. Mrs. Greg-

ory, you can cut out so well that I wish you would finish fixing these nightgowns. Mrs. Issacs is sewing on the last one and we need some more cut out. As for you, Molly, you can rip these bandages. If you run out of material, I've got a pile of old muslin here to use. Except for lint we have a pretty good-sized box for this week. Mrs. Bixby has promised to turn in three pairs of socks and a couple of sheets.

MRS. GREGORY. Speaking of Mrs. Bixby, I saw her this morning and she promised to be here without fail this afternoon.

MRS. BREWSTER. I expected that she would. If she brings her things, we can pack the box in the morning. Now, Molly, tell us all about New York and the fair.

MOLLY. Well, in the first place, we went to hear Clara Louise Kellogg and Faure sing in "The Huguenots." It was simply glorious.

MRS. GRISWOLD. Kellogg? Mmm — mm-m. I heard her in "Faust."

MOLLY. I know you did. This was Miss Kellogg's first appearance this winter and the flowers that were thrown! My gracious, it was a perfect storm. And at the end, she and Faure gave encores. Faure sang a little old French song, "He was king of Yvetot," a *chanson*, I think they call it. And Miss Kellogg sang "Comin' Through the Rye." [*Molly sighs blissfully at the remembrance.*] It was just heavenly. I walked on air for two whole days afterward.

MISS CARROLL. "The Huguenots," was it? I remember back in '36, the year father first took me abroad, we went to hear the first performance of "Les Huguenots" in Paris. It was at the old Academie, a gala evening for the great Rubini, who was the star. It was the first time that I ever heard him.

[*She drops her knitting reminiscently.*]

MOLLY [*leaning forward eagerly*]. Oh, do tell us about it, please.

MISS CARROLL. He was very dark and handsome; he had n't grown stout then. And I remember how dashing he looked as the hero, in a scarlet velvet costume, standing in the candlelight with his wine-glass raised, singing the Romanza. It was a great night for Meyerbeer, and he came before the curtain to bow his thanks along with Rubini. Madame Malibran sang at the same performance, and at the end of the evening we were introduced to her father, Signor Garcia. [*She takes up her knitting again.*] Ah, but those were great years, those years gone by. Rubini is gone now and his voice is but a memory.

MOLLY. Well, I can fully understand how you must have felt, for it seemed like fairyland to me.

MRS. GRISWOLD. Did you hear any speeches?

MOLLY. We heard Mr. Seward speak at Cooper Union, and then Wendell Phillips. We saw Laura Keene in "Our American Cousin," and went to a lot of dances. Really I almost waltzed my head off. Then one day in Wall Street Uncle Ned introduced me to Daniel Drew, the old Erie speculator, who was having an argument with a man with a white coat and chin whiskers who turned out to be Horace Greeley. But despite all the gayety, New York has felt the War a great deal and every one is longing for peace.

MRS. ISSACS. Rumor has it that you met Captain Miller. Did you like him?

MOLLY. Did I? Well, I should say I did. He was just splendid. He and his wife were lovely to me. When I told him where I came from, he asked me if I knew a Mr. Issacs and what a nice chummy time we did have together, talking about you and the boys.

MRS. ISSACS. I suppose you saw the famous violin?

MOLLY. You mean the one he carried through the War?

MRS. ISSACS. Yes. Possibly he told you that he played the "Arkansas Traveller" for Mr. Lincoln when the President came to camp.

MOLLY. Oh, yes, and he showed me Mr. Lincoln's autograph on the back of it.

MRS. BREWSTER. Pardon me for interrupting, but can some one lend me an emery bag? Mine 's disappeared.

MRS. GRISWOLD [*searching her basket*]. Here you are.

[*She tosses the bag.*]

MRS. BREWSTER. Thanks. Now, Molly, go on.

MOLLY. Well, pardon me for changing the subject, but have you seen Nellie Grant's new piano? It 's a beauty. A Chickering, and it has a wonderful tone. All of our east windows were open this morning and you could hear Nellie playing the "Blue Alsatian Mountains" as though her life depended on it.

MISS ABBOT. Minnie Harlow said that she lifted the lid and looked inside and it looked suspiciously like a second-hand piano to her.

MOLLY. Well, I think she 's mistaken. It looks brand-new to me. It 's an engagement present from Mr. Arnold. What a romantic story that was, meeting him last summer in the hospital at Washington.

MISS ABBOT. I've heard that that Arnold is n't all that he 's cracked up to be. They say that his father was nothing but a livery-stable keeper down in York State. Imagine marrying a man with a father like that?

MRS. BREWSTER [*wearily*]. Lavinia, did you ever hear anything good about any one?

MISS ABBOT. Oh, yes. Lots. You know, I for one always look on the bright side of things and try to be tolerant of the faults of others. I told Reverend Floyd after service last Sunday that I felt it one's Christian duty to do so.

MRS. GRISWOLD [*sharply*]. Well, I'm glad to hear you say so, Miss Abbot. It relieves my mind. You certainly were tolerant at the last election when you said that General McClellan was the only righteous and God-fearing man of the candidates.

MISS ABBOT [*loftily*]. My grandfather voted for Jackson, and my father was a Democrat, and what 's good enough for my grandfather is good enough for me. Besides, I am a Congregationalist, and as yet I have been unable to ascertain the church to which Mr. Lincoln belongs.

MRS. ISSACS. Well, Mr. Lincoln is not a heathen.

MISS ABBOT [*stiffly*]. There is a good deal of difference between an ordinary Christian and a Congregationalist.

MRS. GREGORY. Thank God for that.

MISS ABBOT. If you mean to insinuate —

MRS. BREWSTER. Lavinia, no one is insinuating anything. Do talk about something cheerful.

MRS. ISSACS. Well, for one thing, I expect to have a new black silk soon. That 's cheerful news to me.

MISS CARROLL [*climbing back to the aforesaid social eminence*]. My gowns are all made by Worth.

MRS. ISSACS [*countering*]. Mine are made by Issacs. Mrs. Brewster, will you hand me that sleeve lying over your chair back? Yes, that one. Thank you.

MRS. BREWSTER. By the way, Mrs. Griswold, what do you think we ought to do about Mrs. Martin? I went to see her yesterday. The beggarly pension that she gets cannot possibly support her and that three-weeks-old baby. Think of the tragedy of that girl's life. Married just two years, and on the night of the birth of her first child comes the news of her husband's death.

MRS. GREGORY [*bitterly*]. Yes, I was there that night with Doctor Grey. The baby was born just a little after midnight. And I sat there looking at the little creature,

thinking of his father, and my mind went back to Andersonville and my husband there in a filthy hole in the ground and not a name to call on as he died, and, I ask you, do you think the Emancipation Proclamation can give me back my husband and Mrs. Martin's?

MRS. ISSACS [*gently*]. No, dear; God gave you the strength to give your husband to fight for it, though, and God will give you the strength throughout your life to be thankful you were willing that he should go.

MRS. GREGORY [*sighing*]. Ah, yes, I know. But look at her, poor soul. What has she to look forward to? A life of dreary poverty and care. Her husband gone when she is little more than a bride. What has the War done for her? Turned a paradise into a hell. She is bitterly proud and will accept charity or help from no one. You know it. Where can she go?

[*During the latter part of this speech Mrs. Bixby has come in without knocking. None of the ladies see her; their backs are turned, and they are all listening, too. Mrs. Bixby has heard almost all of Mrs. Gregory's speech and she stands quietly just inside the door, listening. She is about sixty, gray-haired, and dressed in delicate lavender. She wears a bonnet. On her arm is a sewing bag. Her face is gentle and lovely, but in repose, as it is now, it is worn and has a sadness that time can never efface. When Mrs. Gregory has finished, she speaks quietly.*]

MRS. BIXBY. She has come to me.

[*All of the ladies turn in astonishment to see her standing there. Mrs. Gregory says involuntarily:*]

MRS. GREGORY. To you?

MRS. BIXBY. Yes. [*To Mrs. Brewster.*] Mrs. Brewster, here are my socks. I must apologize for being late, but

I had just turned the heel of the last one and I wanted to finish it.

MRS. BREWSTER [*impulsively, as she rises*]. Mrs. Bixby, what would our war spirit be without you? I marvel at your courage.

MRS. BIXBY. Courage? Why, I never thought anything about it. One has to take what comes, you know, and take it cheerfully. We're fighting for a great cause, that's one comfort.

[*She sits, takes out her knitting and begins work.*]

MRS. GREGORY [*in a subdued voice*]. Fighting for a great cause. — A great cause. I've often wondered what the spirit of the immortal Joan must have been, and I think that now I know. My eyes are open.

MRS. BIXBY. I am glad that you understand, Mrs. Gregory. These things are hard, but it is of such things that a nation is built. It takes the blood of fearless men and the will of God to hold our country together, and let us be thankful that she has both. And I can look back to Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg without flinching, and say that I am glad that the boys went.

MRS. ISSACS. Truly I do not wonder that Mrs. Martin came to you.

MRS. BIXBY. Oh, that was nothing. She is coming to live with me as a companion [*she smiles sadly*], and you know I need one.

MRS. GRISWOLD. Have you had any news from Bob lately?

MRS. BIXBY. No, I have n't. Not for several weeks. You know he is with Grant at Richmond. I ought to hear soon. Bob, I hope he is well. Bob never was strong like Arthur and Richard.

MRS. GRISWOLD. I hope that soon he'll be safe and sound with you again.

MRS. BIXBY [*turning a little white*]. Safe and sound? [*Nervously.*] Do you remember, Mrs. Griswold, you

said the same thing about Frank the day before he was killed. It seems — oh — I — Oh, pardon me. I do seem a little bit unstrung to-day.

MRS. GRISWOLD. I never realized what I was saying, Mrs. Bixby. I'm so sorry. You know — I.

MRS. ISSACS. Listen to that racket. I wonder what's the matter?

[*There is a loud banging at the door, and an instant later the vestibule door is thrown unceremoniously open. Most of the ladies are on their feet by this time, as Sarah Gregory, a girl of about fifteen, out of breath and tremendously excited, fairly shouts across the room.*]

SARAH GREGORY. Mother! Mother! Richmond has fallen! The news has just come! The band's playing down by the station! They say it means the end of the war! Is n't it great!

[*For a moment all are petrified with astonishment. Then all speak at once.*]

MRS. BREWSTER. Thank heaven, it's all over.

MRS. GREGORY [*remembering*]. But I can't forget Andersonville.

MISS ABBOT. My lord! What do you think of that? I wonder whether Grant was drunk last night?

MRS. GRISWOLD. Just think! Dr. Griswold will soon be home.

MISS CARROLL [*once more the shrewd New Englander*]. This means that that lumber stock of mine will go up.

MRS. ISSACS. Well, I'm thankful I had sons to go.

MOLLY [*reflectively.*] I helped nurse for two years. [*Then brightening.*] I'll get out my new Balmoral boots to celebrate. They have n't been worn once.

MRS. BIXBY [*her eyes bright with tears*]. I thank God that in his unspeakable mercy he has spared me one son. I have not given in vain.

[*They all know that this means the end of the awful*

suffering of the past four years and as they are thus quietly sitting, giving thanks for this glorious peace, a sharp rap is heard on the door. Molly Harmon goes into the vestibule and presently returns with blanched face, bearing two letters. She speaks in a strained voice.]

MOLLY. Mrs. Bixby, two letters have been left here for you. And one [*there is a break in her voice*] is from the War Department.

[*A look of terror crosses Mrs. Bixby's face, but her voice does not tremble as she says.*]

MRS. BIXBY. Read them aloud, Molly, please. I — I can't just now.

[*Molly slowly opens the first letter and in a choking voice reads, amid a deathly silence, the following:*]

WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.
April 10, 1865

MRS. N. C. BIXBY
Beacon, Mass.

DEAR MADAM:

It is my painful and sorrowful duty to inform you that yesterday, at 4.15 P.M., at the final assault upon the rebel works at the City of Richmond, your son, Robert Yates Bixby, 64th Infantry, was instantly killed. All effects found upon his body are being forwarded to you.

Respectfully yours
E. M. STANTON
Secy. of War

Per Asst. Adjt. General.

[*As she finishes the letter, Mrs. Bixby gives a little cry.*]

MRS. BIXBY. Bobby, oh, Bobby, my baby.

[*And her head drops on her arm in utter despair. Then after a moment the second letter is read.*]

MOLLY [*reading*] —

DEAR MADAM:

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts, that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost; and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

[*And when she has finished, after a short space, Mrs. Bixby raises her head. Her voice is calm now and does not falter.*]

MRS. BIXBY. Molly, there are some bandages to be rolled on that chair. Please hand them to me.

And as Molly starts to do so

THE CURTAIN FALLS

X = 0: A NIGHT OF THE TROJAN WAR[1]

By JOHN DRINKWATER

CHARACTERS

PRONAX, SALVIUS } *Greeks.*
ILUS, CAPYS } *Trojans.*
A GREEK SENTINEL.
A GREEK SERVANT.

The action passes between a Greek tent and the Trojan walls, and is continuous.

SCENE I: *A Grecian tent on the Plain before Troy, towards the end of the ten years' war. It is a starry summer night. Pronax and Salvius, two young Greek soldiers, are in the tent, Salvius reading by a lighted torch, Pronax watching the night. During the scene a Sentinel passes at intervals to and fro behind the tent.*

PRONAX. So is the night often at home. I have seen
White orchards brighten under a summer moon,
As now these tents under the stars. This hour
My father's coppices are full of song,
While sleep is on the comfortable house —
Unless one dear one wakes to think of me
And count my chances when the Trojan death
Goes on its nightly errand. [*The Sentinel passes.*]
It's a dear home,
And fragrant, and there 's blessed fruit and corn,

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And thoughts that make me older than my youth
Come even from the nettles at the gate.
To-day, perhaps, the harvesters are out,
And on the night is the ripe pollen blown . . .
And this is the third harvest that has gone
While we have wasted on a barren plain
To avenge some wrong done in our babyhood
On beauty that we have not seen. Three years . . .
But so it is, and so it must be done,
Till the Greek oath is proven. Salvius,
Why is all lovely thought a pain?

SALVIUS. We know
Even upon the flood of adoration,
That beauty passes. That's the tragic tale
That is our world.

PRONAX. Is it not very strange
That, prisoned in this quarrel so long and long,
Until to remember a little Argive street
Is torture to the bone, yet there is now
Nothing of hatred in the blood for them
Whose death is all our daily use, but merely
Consent in death, knowing that death may strike
Across our tongues as lightly as those that lie
Forever dumb because we might not spare.

SALVIUS. Not strange; who goes in company with death,
Watching his daily desolation, thinking,
On every stroke, of all the agony
That from that stroke goes throbbing, throbbing, throbbing,
Forgets all hate. How should we hate the dead?
And, where death ranges as among us now,
You, Pronax, I, and our antagonists
And friends alike are all but as dead men

[*The Sentinel passes.*]

Moving together in a ghostly world,

With life a luckless beggar at the door.
It is not ours to hate, who have all put by
That safety where men think eternity
Immeasurably far, and leisured passions have
Their sorry breeding place. Great kings may hate,
And priests may thunder hate, and gray-beard prophets
May cry again to those who cry their hate
In pride of their new-found authority,
Fearing lest love should mark them as they are,
And send them barren from their brutal thrift.
But not for us this envy. It is ours
Merely to die, or give the death that these
Out of their hatred or indifference will.

PRONAX. It's not that a man grows tardy in his duty . . .
It's still a glad thing to do as the motherland bids,
Though the blind soul forgets how sprang the cause.
I shall die in my hour, though it should come to-day,
Not grudging. Yet it is bitterness for youth,
When nothing should be but scrutiny of life,
Mating, and building towards a durable fame,
And setting the hearthstone trim for a lover's cares,
To let all knowledge of these things go, and learn
Only of death, that should be hidden from youth,
A great thing biding upon the fullness of age,
And not made common gossip among these tides
Of daily beastliness. And still I must remember,
For all I have renounced my thronging life,
My orchards, and my rivers, and the bells
Of twilight cattle moving in the mist.

SALVIUS. I know; the mind grows faint with thinking of them —
Those little, lovely things of home. My bed
Looks to the west on the Ionian sea —
A sweet, fresh-smelling room it is. I wrote
My rightest poems there. I cannot see

A sail now coming Troyward but my brain
Is sick for that small room, above the quay
Where sailors laugh at dawn and all day long,
Until the silent sunset ships go out
Into Sicilian waters.

PRONAX. There your poems
Were made, in Pylos; and in Athens I
Too dreamed, although I caught no lyric song —
I envy you your song; — I was to build
A cleaner state; I dreamed a policy
Purer than states have known; I was to bring
Princedom to every hearth, to every man
Knowledge that he was master of his fate.
The dream is dulled. Three years of Trojan dust
Have taught me but to pray at night for sleep,
And an arm stronger in cunning than my foe's,
A quicker eye to parry death. And, Salvius,
What of your songs?

SALVIUS. Asleep these many days,
Biding their happy time if that should be.

PRONAX. And death is watching, [*The Sentinel passes.*]
and your song, that grew
In the womb of generations for the use
And joy of men, may perish ere it takes
Its larger music, that the tale may go
That Greece drove bloodier war than Ilium;
That's a poor bargain. . . . But these thoughts that stir
Like ghosts out of a life that should have been
Neglect my duty. It is past the hour
I should be nosing along the Trojan wall
To catch what prey may be. I have scarred the wall
At the bend there where I told you, in the breaking stone,
These many nights, until at last I've made
A foothold to the top. It's a queer game,
This tripping of life suddenly in the dark,

This blasting of flesh that is wholesome yet in the blood,
And those who weep, I think, are as those would weep
If I should fall. I loathe it; but, good-night;
You should sleep; it is late, and it is your guard at dawn.

[*He is arming himself, and wrapping himself in his cloak.*]

Good-night. What are you reading?

SALVIUS. Songs that one
Made in my province. The sails are in his song,
And seabirds, and our level pasturelands,
And the bronzed fishers on the flowing tides.
His name was Creon. I will make such songs
If the years will.

PRONAX [*who has poured himself out and drunk a cup of wine*]. I know. Put out the torch
If you're abed before I come. Good-night.

SALVIUS. Good-night: good luck.

PRONAX. And will you bid them fill
The trough; this business may make bloody hands.

[*He looks out into the night, and goes. The Sentinel passes.*]

SALVIUS [*reading*]. Upon the dark Sicilian waves,
The casting fishers go . . .

THE CURTAIN FALLS

SCENE II: *On Troy wall. Capys, a young Trojan soldier, is on guard, looking out over the plain where the Greeks are encamped. Ilus, another young soldier, his friend, wearing a bearskin, comes to him.*

ILUS. When does your watch end?

CAPYS. In two hours; at midnight.

ILUS. They're beautiful, those tents, under the stars.
It is my night to go like a shadow among them,
And, snatching a Greek life, come like a shadow again.
It's an odd skill to have won in the rose of your youth —

Two years, and once in seven days — a hundred,
More than a hundred, and only once a fault.
A hundred Greek boys, Capys, like myself —
Loving, and quick in honour, and clean of fear —
Spoiled in their beauty by me whose desire is beauty
Since first I walked the April hedgerows. Would time
But work upon this Helen's face, maybe
This nine-year quarrel would be done, and Troy
Grow sane, and her confounding councillors
Be given carts to clean and drive to market.
What of your sea-girl? Has she grown?

CAPYS. You ask
Always the question, friend. The chisels rust,
The moths are in my linen coats, my mallets
Are broken. Ilus, in my brain were limbs
Supple and mighty; the beauty of women moved
To miraculous birth in my imagining;
I had conceived the body of man, to make
Divine articulation of the joy
That flows uncounted in every happy step
Of health; the folk faring about Troy streets
Should have flowered upon my marble marvellously:
I would have given my land a revelation
Sweet as the making of it had been to me.
And still it shall be, if ever from my mind
Falls this obscure monotony, that makes
The world an echo, its vivid gesture gone.
Troy peaceful shall be Troy magnificent,
For I will make her so.

ILUS. It would be grand
If Troy would use us as we might be used,
To build and sing and make her market-places
Honest, and show her people that all evil
Is the lethargic mind. I have seen this Troy
Bloom in my thought into a simple state

Where jealousy was dead because no man spoke
Out of his vanity of the thing he knew not.
Capys, it is so little that is needed
For righteousness; we are all so truly made,
If only to our making we were true.
Why should we fight these Greeks? There was some anger,
Some generous heat of the blood those years ago,
When Paris brought his Helen into Troy
With Menelaus screaming at his heels;
But that's forgotten now, and none can stay
This thing that none would have endure. I have thought
Often, upon those nights when I have gone
Fatally through the Grecian tents, how well
Might he whose life I stole and I have thriven
Together conspiring this or that of good
For all men, and I have sickened, and gone on
To strike again as Troy has bidden me,
For an oath is a queer weevil in the brain.

CAPYS. Who's there?

A VOICE. Troy and the Trojan death.

CAPYS. Pass Troy.
It is still upon the plains to-night, and the stars
Are a lantern light against you — you must go
Warily, Ilus. The loss of many friends
Has sharpened my love, not dulled me against loss.
I am careful for you to-night in all this beauty
Of glowing summer— disaster might choose this night
So brutally, and so disaster likes.
Go warily.

ILUS. I know the tented squares
And every lane among the Greeks, as I know
The walls of Troy; and I can pass at night
Within an handshot of a watching eye,
And be but a shadow of cloud or a windy bush.

A hundred times, remember.

CAPYS. Yet would I could come
To take your danger or share it.

ILUS. No; there's a use
That's more than courage in this. And, Capys, yet
Those chisels must win your vision into form
For the world's light and ease. It's an ill day
Among ill days that smites the seer's lips.
Your work 's to do.

CAPYS. And yours — that dream of Troy
Regenerate, with the heart of the people shown
In the people's life, not lamentably hurt
By men who, mazed with authority, put by
Authority's proper use, and so are evil,
While still the folk under their tyranny keep
Their kindness, waiting upon deliverance.
So may we come together to our work,
In prophecy you of life, creation I.
How long to-night?

ILUS. Before your watch is done
I shall be back. Here at this point, before
The night is full; throw me the rope upon
The signal, thus —

[*He whistles. He is climbing over the parapet, to which he has hooked a rope.*]

Peace with you till I come.

CAPYS. And luck with you. Go warily. Farewell.

[*Ilus drops down to the plain below. Capys draws the rope up. There is silence for a moment.*]

CAPYS [*moving to and fro along the wall*].

Or Greek or Trojan, all is one
When snow falls on our summertime,
And when the happy noonday rhyme
Because of death is left undone.
The bud that breaks must surely pass,
Yet is the bud more sure of May

Than youth of age, when every day
Death is youth's shadow in the glass.

[*A hand is seen groping on the parapet. Pronax, looking cautiously along the wall, draws himself up silently, unseen by Capys, who continues:*]

Beside us ever moves a hand,
Unseen, of deadly stroke, and when
It falls on youth —

[*He hears the movement behind him, and turns swiftly.*]

Who's there?

PRONAX [*rushing upon him*]. A Greek unlucky to Trojan arms —
A sworn Greek, terrible in obedience.

[*His onslaught has overwhelmed Capys, who falls without a cry, the Greek's dagger in his breast. Pronax draws it out, looks at his dead antagonist, shudders, peers out over the wall, and very carefully climbs down at the point where he came.*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS

SCENE III: *The Greek tent again. Salvius is still reading, and the torch burning. A Servant brings a large jar of water which he pours into the trough outside the tent. He goes with the jar, and a moment later the Sentinel passes behind the tent. There is silence for a few moments, Salvius turning the pages of his book. Then, from the shadow in front of the tent, Ilus in his bearskin is seen stealthily approaching. He reaches the tent opening without a sound, and in the same unbroken silence his dagger is in the Greek's heart. Ilus catches the dead man as he falls, and lets his body sink on to one of the couches inside the tent. The Sentinel passes. Ilus, breathless, waits till the steps have gone, and then, stealthily as he came, disappears.*

There is a pause. Pronax comes out of the darkness,

and, throwing his cloak on the ground, goes straight to the trough, and begins to wash his hands.

PRONAX. What, still awake, and reading? Those are rare songs,
To keep a soldier out of his bed at night.
Ugh — Salvius, sometimes it's horrible —
He had no time for a word — he walked those walls
Under the stars as a lover might walk a garden
Among the moonlit roses — this cleansing 's good —
He was saying some verses, I think, till death broke in.
Cold water's good after this pitiful doing,
And freshens the mind for comfortable sleep.
Well, there, it's done, and sleep's a mighty curer
For all vexations. [*The Sentinel passes.*]
It's time that torch was out —
I do not need it, and you should be abed . . .
Salvius . . . [*He looks into the tent for the first time.*]
What, sleeping, and still dressed?
That's careless, friend, and the torch alight still . . .
Salvius . . .
Salvius, I say . . . gods! . . . what, friend . . .
Salvius, Salvius . . .
Dead . . . it is done . . . it is done . . . there is judgment made . . .
Beauty is broken . . . and there on the Trojan wall
One too shall come . . . one too shall come . . .
[*The Sentinel passes.*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS

SCENE IV: *The Trojan wall. The body of Capys lies in the starlight and silence. After a few moments the signal comes from Ilus below. There is a pause. The signal is repeated. There is a pause.*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE RISING OF THE MOON [1]

By LADY GREGORY

PERSONS

SERGEANT.
POLICEMAN X.
POLICEMAN B.
A RAGGED MAN.

SCENE: *Side of a quay in a seaport town. Some posts and chains. A large barrel. Enter three policemen. Moonlight.*

Sergeant, who is older than the others, crosses the stage to right and looks down steps. The others put down a pastepot and unroll a bundle of placards.

POLICEMAN B. I think this would be a good place to put up a notice. [*He points to barrel.*]

POLICEMAN X. Better ask him. [*Calls to Sergeant.*] Will this be a good place for a placard? [*No answer.*]

POLICEMAN B. Will we put a notice here on the barrel? [*No answer.*]

SERGEANT. There's a flight of steps here that leads to the water. This is a place that should be minded well. If he got down here, his friends might have a boat to meet him; they might send it in here from outside.

POLICEMAN B. Would the barrel be a good place to put a notice up?

SERGEANT. It might; you can put it there.

[*They paste the notice up.*]

[1] From *Seven Short Plays*, by Lady Gregory, courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London. All acting rights, both professional and amateur, are reserved in the United States, Great Britain, and all countries of the copyright union by the author. Performances forbidden and right of presentation reserved. Application for the right of performing this play or reading it in public should be made to Samuel French, 28 West 38th Street, New York.

SERGEANT [*reading it*]. Dark hair — dark eyes, smooth face, height five feet five — there's not much to take hold of in that — It's a pity I had no chance of seeing him before he broke out of jail. They say he's a wonder, that it's he makes all the plans for the whole organization. There is n't another man in Ireland would have broken jail the way he did. He must have some friends among the jailers.

POLICEMAN B. A hundred pounds is little enough for the Government to offer for him. You may be sure any man in the force that takes him will get promotion.

SERGEANT. I'll mind this place myself. I would n't wonder at all if he came this way. He might come slipping along there [*points to side of quay*], and his friends might be waiting for him there [*points down steps*], and once he got away it's little chance we'd have of finding him; it's maybe under a load of kelp he'd be in a fishing boat, and not one to help a married man that wants it to the reward.

POLICEMAN X. And if we get him itself, nothing but abuse on our heads for it from the people, and maybe from our own relations.

SERGEANT. Well, we have to do our duty in the force. Have n't we the whole country depending on us to keep law and order? It's those that are down would be up and those that are up would be down, if it was n't for us. Well, hurry on, you have plenty of other places to placard yet, and come back here then to me. You can take the lantern. Don't be too long now. It's very lonesome here with nothing but the moon.

POLICEMAN B. It's a pity we can't stop with you. The Government should have brought more police into the town, with *him* in jail, and at assize time too. Well, good luck to your watch. [*They go out.*]

SERGEANT. [*Walks up and down once or twice and looks at placard.*] A hundred pounds and promotion sure.

There must be a great deal of spending in a hundred pounds. It's a pity some honest man not to be the better of that.

[*A ragged man appears at left and tries to slip past. Sergeant suddenly turns.*]

SERGEANT. Where are you going?

MAN. I'm a poor ballad-singer, your honor. I thought to sell some of these [*holds out bundle of ballads*] to the sailors. [*He goes on.*]

SERGEANT. Stop! Did n't I tell you to stop? You can't go on there.

MAN. Oh, very well. It's a hard thing to be poor. All the world's against the poor.

SERGEANT. Who are you?

MAN. You'd be as wise as myself if I told you, but I don't mind. I'm one Jimmy Walsh, a ballad-singer.

SERGEANT. Jimmy Walsh? I don't know that name.

MAN. Ah, sure, they know it well enough in Ennis. Were you ever in Ennis, sergeant?

SERGEANT. What brought you here?

MAN. Sure, it's to the assizes I came, thinking I might make a few shillings here or there. It's in the one train with the judges I came.

SERGEANT. Well, if you came so far, you may as well go farther, for you'll walk out of this.

MAN. I will, I will; I'll just go on where I was going. [*Goes toward steps.*]

SERGEANT. Come back from those steps; no one has leave to pass down them to-night.

MAN. I'll just sit on the top of the steps till I see will some sailor buy a ballad off me that would give me my supper. They do be late going back to the ship. It's often I saw them in Cork carried down the quay in a hand-cart.

SERGEANT. Move on, I tell you. I won't have any one lingering about the quay to-night.

MAN. Well, I'll go. It's the poor have the hard life!

Maybe yourself might like one, sergeant. Here's a good sheet now. [*Turns one over.*] "Content and a pipe" — that's not much. "The Peeler and the goat" — you would n't like that — "Johnny Hart" — that's a lovely song.

SERGEANT. Move on.

MAN. Ah, wait till you hear it. [*Sings.*]

> There was a rich farmer's daughter lived near the town of Ross;
> She courted a Highland soldier, his name was Johnny Hart;
> Says the mother to her daughter, "I'll go distracted mad
> If you marry that Highland soldier dressed up in Highland plaid."

SERGEANT. Stop that noise.

[*Man wraps up his ballads and shuffles toward the steps.*]

SERGEANT. Where are you going?

MAN. Sure you told me to be going, and I am going.

SERGEANT. Don't be a fool. I did n't tell you to go that way; I told you to go back to the town.

MAN. Back to the town, is it?

SERGEANT [*taking him by the shoulder and shoving him before him*]. Here, I'll show you the way. Be off with you. What are you stopping for?

MAN [*who has been keeping his eye on the notice, points to it*]. I think I know what you're waiting for, sergeant.

SERGEANT. What's that to you?

MAN. And I know well the man you're waiting for — I know him well — I'll be going. [*He shuffles on.*]

SERGEANT. You know him? Come back here. What sort is he?

MAN. Come back is it, sergeant? Do you want to have me killed?

SERGEANT. Why do you say that?

MAN. Never mind. I'm going. I would n't be in your shoes if the reward was ten times as much. [*Goes on off stage to left.*] Not if it was ten times as much.

SERGEANT [*rushing after him*]. Come back here, come back.

[*Drags him back.*] What sort is he? Where did you see him?

MAN. I saw him in my own place, in the County Clare. I tell you you would n't like to be looking at him. You'd be afraid to be in the one place with him. There is n't a weapon he does n't know the use of, and as to strength, his muscles are as hard as that board [*slapping barrel*].

SERGEANT. Is he as bad as that?

MAN. He is then.

SERGEANT. Do you tell me so?

MAN. There was a poor man in our place, a sergeant from Ballyvaughan. — It was with a lump of stone he did it.

SERGEANT. I never heard of that.

MAN. And you would n't, sergeant. It's not everything that happens gets into the papers. And there was a policeman in plain clothes, too. . . . It is in Limerick he was. . . . It was after the time of the attack on the police barrack at Kilmallock. . . . Moonlight. . . just like this . . . waterside. . . . Nothing was known for certain.

SERGEANT. Do you say so? It's a terrible county to belong to.

MAN. That's so, indeed! You might be standing there, looking out that way, thinking you saw him coming up this side of the quay [*points*], and he might be coming up this other side [*points*], and he'd be on you before you knew where you were.

SERGEANT. It's a whole troop of police they ought to put here to stop a man like that.

MAN. But if you'd like me to stop with you, I could be looking down this side. I could be sitting up here on this barrel.

SERGEANT. And you know him well, too?

MAN. I'd know him a mile off, sergeant.

SERGEANT. But you would n't want to share the reward?

MAN. Is it a poor man like me, that has to be going the

roads and singing in fairs, to have the name on him that he took a reward? But you don't want me. I'll be safer in the town.

SERGEANT. Well, you can stop.

MAN [*getting up on barrel*]. All right, sergeant. I wonder now, you're not tired out, sergeant, walking up and down the way you are.

SERGEANT. If I'm tired I'm used to it.

MAN. You might have hard work before you to-night yet. Take it easy while you can. There's plenty of room up here on the barrel, and you see farther when you're higher up.

SERGEANT. Maybe so. [*Gets up beside him on barrel, facing right. They sit back to back, looking different ways.*] You made me feel a bit queer with the way you talked.

MAN. Give me a match, sergeant [*he gives it, and Man lights pipe*]; take a draw yourself? It'll quiet you. Wait now till I give you a light, but you need n't turn round. Don't take your eye off the quay for the life of you.

SERGEANT. Never fear, I won't. [*Lights pipe. They both smoke.*] Indeed, it's a hard thing to be in the force, out at night and no thanks for it, for all the danger we're in. And it's little we get but abuse from the people, and no choice but to obey our orders, and never asked when a man is sent into danger, if you are a married man with a family.

MAN [*sings*].

As through the hills I walked to view the hills and shamrock plain,
I stood awhile where nature smiles to view the rocks and streams,
On a matron fair I fixed my eyes beneath a fertile vale,
As she sang her song it was on the wrong of poor old Granuaile.

SERGEANT. Stop that; that's no song to be singing in these times.[1]

[1] "Old Granuaile" is a traditional patriotic song named from Grace O'Malley, a powerful Irish chieftainess during the reign of Elizabeth. In the course of time this woman came to symbolize Ireland itself.

MAN. Ah, sergeant, I was only singing to keep my heart up. It sinks when I think of him. To think of us two sitting here, and he creeping up the quay, maybe, to get to us.

SERGEANT. Are you keeping a good lookout?

MAN. I am; and for no reward too. Am n't I the foolish man? But when I saw a man in trouble, I never could help trying to get him out of it. What's that? Did something hit me? [*Rubs his heart.*]

SERGEANT [*patting him on the shoulder*]. You will get your reward in heaven.

MAN. I know that, I know that, sergeant, but life is precious.

SERGEANT. Well, you can sing if it gives you more courage.

MAN [*sings*].

Her head was bare, her hands and feet with iron bands were bound,
Her pensive strain and plaintive wail mingles with the evening gale,
And the song she sang with mournful air, I am old Granuaile.
Her lips so sweet that monarchs kissed . . .

SERGEANT. That's not it. . . . "Her gown she wore was stained with gore." . . . That's it — you missed that.

MAN. You 're right, sergeant, so it is; I missed it. [*Repeats line.*] But to think of a man like you knowing a song like that.

SERGEANT. There's many a thing a man might know and might not have any wish for.

MAN. Now, I dare say, sergeant, in your youth, you used to be sitting up on a wall, the way you are sitting up on this barrel now, and the other lads beside you, and you singing "Granuaile"?

SERGEANT. I did then.

MAN. And the "Shan Bhean Bhocht"? . . .

SERGEANT. I did then.

MAN. And the "Green on the Cape"?

SERGEANT. That was one of them.

MAN. And maybe the man you are watching for to-night

used to be sitting on the wall, when he was young, and singing those same songs. . . . It's a queer world. . . .

SERGEANT. Whisht! . . . I think I see something coming. . . . It's only a dog.

MAN. And is n't it a queer world? . . . Maybe it's one of the boys you used to be singing with that time you will be arresting to-day or to-morrow, and sending into the dock. . . .

SERGEANT. That's true, indeed.

MAN. And maybe one night, after you had been singing, if the other boys had told you some plan they had, some plan to free the country, you might have joined with them . . . and maybe it is you might be in trouble now.

SERGEANT. Well, who knows but I might? I had a great spirit in those days.

MAN. It's a queer world, sergeant, and it's little any mother knows when she sees her child creeping on the floor what might happen to it before it has gone through its life, or who will be who in the end.

SERGEANT. That's a queer thought now, and a true thought. Wait now till I think it out . . . If it was n't for the sense I have, and for my wife and family, and for me joining the force the time I did, it might be myself now would be after breaking jail and hiding in the dark, and it might be him that's hiding in the dark and that got out of jail would be sitting up where I am on this barrel. . . . And it might be myself would be creeping up trying to make my escape from himself, and it might be himself would be keeping the law, and myself would be breaking it, and myself would be trying maybe to put a bullet in his head, or to take up a lump of a stone the way you said he did . . . no, that myself did . . . Oh! [*Gasps. After a pause.*] What's that?

[*Grasps Man's arm.*]

MAN [*jumps off barrel and listens, looking out over water*]. It's nothing, sergeant.

SERGEANT. I thought it might be a boat. I had a notion there might be friends of his coming about the quays with a boat.

MAN. Sergeant, I am thinking it was with the people you were, and not with the law you were when you were a young man.

SERGEANT. Well, if I was foolish then, that time's gone.

MAN. Maybe, sergeant, it comes into your head sometimes, in spite of your belt and your tunic, that it might have been as well for you to have followed Granuaile.

SERGEANT. It's no business of yours what I think.

MAN. Maybe, sergeant, you'll be on the side of the country yet.

SERGEANT [*gets off barrel*]. Don't talk to me like that. I have my duties and I know them. [*Looks round.*] That was a boat; I hear the oars.

[*Goes to the steps and looks down.*]

MAN [*sings*].

Oh, then tell me, Shawn O'Farrell,
Where the gathering is to be.
In the old spot by the river
Right well known to you and me!

SERGEANT. Stop that! Stop that, I tell you!

MAN [*sings louder*].

One word more for signal token,
Whistle up the marching tune,
With your pike upon your shoulder,
At the Rising of the Moon.

SERGEANT. If you don't stop that, I'll arrest you.

[*A whistle from below answers, repeating the air.*]

SERGEANT. That's a signal. [*Stands between him and steps.*] You must not pass this way. . . . Step farther back. . . . Who are you? You are no ballad-singer.

MAN. You need n't ask who I am; that placard will tell you. [*Points to placard.*]

SERGEANT. You are the man I am looking for.

MAN [*takes off hat and wig. Sergeant seizes them*]. I am. There's a hundred pounds on my head. There is a friend of mine below in a boat. He knows a safe place to bring me to.

SERGEANT [*looking still at hat and wig*]. It's a pity! it's a pity! You deceived me. You deceived me well.

MAN. I am a friend of Granuaile. There is a hundred pounds on my head.

SERGEANT. It's a pity, it's a pity!

MAN. Will you let me pass, or must I make you let me?

SERGEANT. I am in the force. I will not let you pass.

MAN. I thought to do it with my tongue. [*Puts hand in breast.*] What is that?

VOICE OF POLICEMAN X [*outside*]. Here, this is where we left him.

SERGEANT. It's my comrades coming.

MAN. You won't betray me . . . the friend of Granuaile.

[*Slips behind barrel.*]

VOICE OF POLICEMAN B. That was the last of the placards.

POLICEMAN X [*as they come in*]. If he makes his escape it won't be unknown he'll make it.

[*Sergeant puts hat and wig behind his back.*]

POLICEMAN B. Did any one come this way?

SERGEANT [*after a pause*]. No one.

POLICEMAN B. No one at all?

SERGEANT. No one at all.

POLICEMAN B. We had no orders to go back to the station; we can stop along with you.

SERGEANT. I don't want you. There is nothing for you to do here.

POLICEMAN B. You bade us to come back here and keep watch with you.

SERGEANT. I'd sooner be alone. Would any man come this way and you making all that talk? It is better the place be quiet.

POLICEMAN B. Well, we'll leave you the lantern anyhow. [*Hands it to him.*]

SERGEANT. I don't want it. Bring it with you.

POLICEMAN B. You might want it. There are clouds coming up and you have the darkness of the night before you yet. I'll leave it over here on the barrel. [*Goes to barrel.*]

SERGEANT. Bring it with you I tell you. No more talk.

POLICEMAN B. Well, I thought it might be a comfort to you. I often think when I have it in my hand and can be flashing it about into every dark corner [*doing so*] that it's the same as being beside the fire at home, and the bits of bogwood blazing up now and again.

[*Flashes it about, now on the barrel, now on Sergeant.*]

SERGEANT [*furious*]. Be off the two of you, yourselves and your lantern!

[*They go out. Man comes from behind barrel. He and Sergeant stand looking at one another.*]

SERGEANT. What are you waiting for?

MAN. For my hat, of course, and my wig. You would n't wish me to get my death of cold? [*Sergeant gives them.*]

MAN [*going toward steps*]. Well, good-night, comrade, and thank you. You did me a good turn to-night, and I'm obliged to you. Maybe I'll be able to do as much for you when the small rise up and the big fall down . . . when we all change places at the Rising [*waves his hand and disappears*] of the Moon.[1]

SERGEANT [*turning his back to audience and reading placard*]. A hundred pounds reward! A hundred pounds! [*Turns toward audience.*] I wonder now, am I as great a fool as I think I am?

CURTAIN

[1] Among the Irish patriots, "The Rising of the Moon," which is the title of a "rebel" song, has been a symbolic expression for the time when Ireland should rise in the effort to become a free nation.

NEVERTHELESS[1]

By STUART WALKER

CHARACTERS

A Girl.
A Boy.
A Burglar.

The Scene is a room just upstairs.
The Time is last night — or to-night, perhaps.

PROLOGUE. Our next play is an interlude before the curtains. You may sleep during an interlude, but you must n't snore or have the nightmare because that would be very discourteous to the author and very discouraging to us. We cannot live if you do not like us, and you cannot like us if you do not keep awake.

[*After the Prologue has bowed the Device-Bearer brings two chairs, a stool, a table, a lamp and places them on the forestage. If you are not a very grown-up you know immediately that you are in a room that belongs to very young people.*]

[*The Boy enters carrying a book. He is angry. He looks around to see if any one is looking and then goes to the table and tries to remove some money from a small bank that has two locks; but he can't find the keys.*]

[*As he is shaking it violently in an attempt to force it, the Girl enters.*]

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GIRL. Billie!

BOY. I will force it!

GIRL. You made a compact with me.

BOY. Don't use words like that — I hate words.

[*He continues to try to force the bank.*]

GIRL. It 's a miserable shame, Billie Cleves!

BOY. Now, Lou, don't use any more words on me. I won't stand it.

GIRL. Well, what shall I say?

BOY. Say *dirty* shame.

GIRL. Billie!

BOY. I don't care. I'm tired of being corrected all the time. When I'm old enough to paddle my own canoe, I'm going to murder grammar all the time. I'm going to use short words and I hope I'll say "I seen" and "I would have went."

GIRL. Billie Cleves!

BOY. And, if I can get this bank open, I'll go away forever to-night and I'll talk just as I please.

GIRL. My, Billie! You *are* angry!

BOY. Angry! I'm mad! I'm awful mad!

[*He shakes the bank terrifically.*]

GIRL. You'll break it.

BOY. I don't care. I'm going to bust it —

GIRL. Billie, mother would n't like that word at all.

BOY. I don't care. I'm going to bu — break it open and then I'm going to leave home forever.

[*He puts it on the floor and starts to trample it.*]

GIRL. Billie Cleves, don't you dare! That 's half mine. And you can't open it unless we both agree.

BOY. Who said so?

GIRL. Why, it was our compact.

BOY. If you were fourteen years old, Louise Cleves, and your mother punished you for speaking bad English, you 'd forget all about compacts.

GIRL. No, I would n't.

BOY. Yes, you would.

GIRL. No, I would n't.

BOY. You don't know what you 'd do; you 're not fourteen and you 're not a boy.

GIRL. I would n't break a compact if I were a hundred and fourteen.

BOY. Now, Lou, listen.

GIRL. I don't want to listen.

BOY. Just put yourself in my place.

GIRL. Billie Cleves, we agreed never, never to open that bank until we were in need of food and clothing.

BOY. Well, I'm in need, Lou.

GIRL. No, you 're not; father and mother give you all the food and clothes you want.

BOY. But I'm going to run away forever and go to Honolulu or Texas.

GIRL. No, you 're not.

BOY. I am.

GIRL. Well, Billie, you deserved to be corrected.

BOY. All I said was, "Jim 's a rotten rider." And he is.

GIRL. Well, that was n't nice.

BOY [*exasperated at not being able to open the bank*]. Lou, where is my key?

GIRL. I put it away.

BOY. Where?

GIRL. Our compact was for me to take the key to your blue lock and hide it, and you were to take the key to my pink lock and hide it so we could n't fall into temptation.

BOY. I'll pick the locks like a burglar.

GIRL. You can't. They 're both pick-proof. And there 's only one key in all the whole wide world for each lock.

BOY. I'll get your key and open your lock.

GIRL. My key won't open your lock.

BOY. I can't find yours where I hid it.

GIRL. I found it and hid it again.

BOY. Where is it?

GIRL. I don't think I ought to tell you, Billie, I'm afraid you'll fall into temptation.

BOY. How about you?

GIRL. Boys are more easily tempted than women.

BOY. H-m!

GIRL. Because they get out more.

BOY. I'll throw it and break it.

GIRL. Now, Billie, don't be rash.

BOY. I don't care.

GIRL. Father'll hear you.

BOY. Father won't hear me much longer about this house.

GIRL. Please, Billie, read your book.

BOY. I won't do it, I won't. I'm sick of goody-goody books.

GIRL. What did mother give you to read?

BOY [*sullenly*]. There it is.

GIRL. "The Narrow Path!" Why, she sent me up here to read that, too.

BOY. What for?

GIRL. I said "he don't" instead of "he does n't."

BOY. Just after I said it?

GIRL. Yes.

BOY. You *are* a goose.

GIRL. But I don't get angry like you do.

BOY. You're not as old as I am. Other boys of my age do pretty much as they please.

GIRL. Well, here we are. There 's no use quarrelling, because it 's mother's plan to make us read a fine book whenever we make mistakes in grammar. And you know mother's plans! [*She opens the book.*] Oh, dear, no pictures! . . . Let 's hurry up.

BOY. I won't do it.

GIRL. Come on, Billie, and get it over with.

BOY. Give me the keys or I'll break — I'll *bust* it.

GIRL. I won't give you the keys and you won't break it — William Cleves, if you don't live up to our compact, I'll not have anything more to do with you.

BOY. I don't care. [*He throws the bank violently.*]

GIRL. Billie! [*She pounces upon the bank and bursts into tears.*] I never thought you 'd do it. [*The Boy moves about uneasily.*] I never thought you 'd do it.

[*She weeps torrentially.*]

BOY. Now, Lou —

GIRL. You broke our compact and tried to destroy our bank.

BOY [*defiantly.*] I tried to *bust* it — and I hope I did.

GIRL. Billie Cleves! — Well, you did n't even nick it.

[*She takes up the book after carefully placing the bank so that the Boy can't get it.*]

BOY. Lou, won't you lend me the keys a moment?

GIRL [*relentlessly*]. You broke a compact.

BOY. Please, Lou.

GIRL. I have my reading to do.

BOY. I'm going to go away — forever — Lou!

GIRL. Good-bye.

BOY [*fiercely*]. I want my money!

GIRL. It 's *our* money. And I'm the guardian.

BOY. All right. . . . Good-bye.

GIRL. Good-bye. [*Reading.*] "The Narrow Path is very steep and straight. It leads to a land of gold and it is not easy to negotiate because Heaven thinks it is best for people to climb for what they want. Nevertheless —"

BOY. Are you going to give me the money to run away with?

GIRL. No.

BOY. Good-bye.

GIRL. A compact is binding to both parties, father says.

BOY. Good-bye.

GIRL. Good-bye. [*Reading.*] Nevertheless — nevertheless — [*She begins to giggle deliciously.*]

BOY. What 's funny, Lou?

GIRL. Come here and look, Billie.

[*The Boy drags himself to the book.*]

BOY. What?

GIRL. This word.

BOY. Never — the — less. It 's just like any other word.

GIRL. No, it is n't. *Steep* and *straight* and *the* all look like something. But this is just funny.

BOY. Nevertheless. [*The Girl goes off into gales of laughter.*]

BOY [*reading further and turning the page*]. Here it is again. [*He laughs.*]

GIRL. Where?

BOY. Here. [*Turning back.*]

GIRL. Neverthe — [*turning the page and going into another paroxysm of laughter as she finds the rest of the word on the next page*] — less.

BOY. It *is* funny-looking!

GIRL. What does it mean?

BOY. I'll look in the dictionary.

GIRL. I know what it means in a way, but I can't explain it —

BOY. So do I. [*He goes to the dictionary.*]

GIRL. Never — the — less. [*She looks up and sees that the Boy is busy. She looks around cautiously, then takes up the bank and hides it. As she hears the Boy coming back, she resumes her seat and the book.*]

BOY. It means *notwithstanding, yet, however* . . .

GIRL. Dictionaries never tell you the real, honest, true, live meaning, do they, Billie?

BOY [*fascinated*]. Never — the — less.

GIRL. It 's three words all huddled together.

[*She pictures it on her fingers.*]

BOY [*counting the words on his fingers*]. Never — the — less.

GIRL. How did they come together?

BOY [*losing himself in the puzzle*]. I don't know.

GIRL. Let 's ask mother.

BOY [*remembering his anger*]. No, I won't.

GIRL. I will.

BOY. Let 's be independent, Lou. I don't like to ask favors when I'm punished.

GIRL. Well, I'm being punished, too; but I want to know all about this funny word.

BOY. Let 's try some other way.

GIRL. I know!

BOY. What?

GIRL. They say if you put out the lights and shut your eyes very tight and wait very patiently that an elf will come and tell you anything you want to know.

BOY. I don't believe in elfs.

GIRL. Billie!

BOY. I don't.

GIRL. The plural of elf is elves. We had it to-day.

BOY [*exasperated*]. I knew it, — but I get tired of having to think about everything before I speak. Sometimes I try not to think at all.

GIRL [*going to the lamp*]. I'm going to turn out the light.

BOY [*scornfully*]. Nothing will happen.

GIRL. Well, we can try.

BOY [*hunting*]. Lou, where 's the bank?

GIRL. I hid it, Billie.

BOY. You shan't hide my money!

GIRL. Keep quiet, Billie, and sit down.

[*She puts the light out.*]

BOY [*sheepishly*]. I feel so silly.

GIRL. Are your eyes shut?

BOY. No.

GIRL. Billie, please shut your eyes.

BOY. I won't do it . . . I'm going to turn on the light.

GIRL. Now, Billie . . . [*He evidently starts for the lamp.*] I'll give you the keys if you're good.

BOY. Now?

GIRL. No, afterward.

BOY [*turning on the lamp*]. Promise.

GIRL. Yes. [*Out goes the light as she pulls it.*] Are you sitting down?

BOY. Uh-huh!

GIRL. Are your eyes shut?

BOY. Uh-huh!

GIRL. Tight?

BOY. Uh-huh!

GIRL. And when he comes don't talk.

BOY. Uh —

GIRL. 'Cause you don't believe and you might frighten him away.

BOY. Uh —

GIRL. Where are you, Billie?

BOY. Here I am.

GIRL. Move over.

BOY. There is n't much room.

GIRL. Now. [*Silence.*] Do you hear anything?

BOY. No.

[*Silence.*

A pale light appears between the curtains, then a dark form.

The light is shut off and presently reappears at the table.

The Burglar opens the drawers and, taking out some pretty things, puts them in his pocket. The light goes out.

Silence.]

GIRL. Billie, I just can't stand it a moment longer. Don't you hear the elf? . . . [*A sound.*] There he is!

[*The light comes on again and the Burglar takes up the bank. Just as he is putting it in his pocket, the Girl speaks.*]

GIRL. Do you know what *nevertheless* means?

[*The bank goes clattering to the floor. The light is turned upon the two children. The Burglar takes a step forward and stumbles over the bank.*]

BURGLAR. Don't holler. [*The Boy turns the light on.*]

BOY. A burglar!

GIRL. If you don't move, Billie, a burglar won't hurt you.

BOY. Hold up your hands, Lou.

BOY and GIRL [*holding their hands up.*]. We give up.

BURGLAR. Put out the light.

GIRL. Please don't put out the light . . . We'll be good. [*A door is heard to close in the next room.*]

BURGLAR. Put out the light. [*The light goes out.*] Who was that?

GIRL. Mary.

BURGLAR. What 's she doing?

BOY. Don't you tell him, Lou. Make him let you turn the light on.

GIRL [*deciding to weep*]. I'm afraid of the dark.

BURGLAR. Quit your bawling and put on the light. [*The Boy puts on the light.*] What 's she doing?

GIRL. She 's setting the burglar alarm for the night.

BURGLAR. How do I get out of here?

GIRL. You can't get out because if you open anything all the bells will ring and the police will come.

BOY [*bravely stepping forward*]. We'll put you in jail. [*As the Burglar turns, however, he wilts.*]

GIRL. Billie, let 's let him go if he tells us what "nevertheless" means.

BURGLAR. Huh?

GIRL. Do you know what "nevertheless" means?

BURGLAR. What's "nevertheless"?

GIRL. It's a word.

BURGLAR. What's the game?

BOY. If you know what "nevertheless" means, we'll let you go.

GIRL. It's a compact.

BURGLAR. Promise you won't give me up.

GIRL. We won't give you up. . . . Sit down.

[*The Burglar sits.*]

BOY. Where's your pistol?

BURGLAR. I ain't got none.

GIRL. Oh, you must n't say that.

BURGLAR. Well, I ain't.

GIRL. It's very wrong to say "I ain't." My mother would make us read *all* "The Narrow Path" if we talked like that.

BURGLAR [*puzzled*]. What!

BOY. They carry pistols in Texas.

BURGLAR. Well, I ain't never used none, and I ain't never been in Texas, and what's more I ain't never going to Texas!

GIRL. He's a very pleasant burglar, Billie.

BURGLAR. Well, I'm in a pickle, but I can't hurt no kids.

GIRL. See, Billie, how bad grammar sounds.

BURGLAR. I don't care nothing about grammar. When you have to paddle your own canoe, you can't take no time for grammar.

GIRL. Oh, dear Billie, don't ever paddle your own canoe . . . Billie . . . [*She goes to whisper to the Boy.*] [*To the Burglar, as she passes him.*] Excuse me. [*To the Boy.*] I'm going to try mother's plan on him. I'm going to read to him! [*The Burglar rises and looks around.*]

BOY [*whispering*]. I'm going to call father.

GIRL. Now, Billie, maybe we can make him good.
BOY. Well, he can't get away and he has n't a pistol —
BURGLAR. Hey, quit your jawing and give me up if you want to.
GIRL. We're not going to give you up.
BURGLAR. Huh?
GIRL. We're going to read to you.
BURGLAR. Quit your kidding.
GIRL. How does it feel to be a burglar?
BURGLAR. Not so good.
GIRL. Are n't you afraid to be a burglar?
BOY. 'Course not. Look how big he is.
GIRL. Are n't you ashamed to be a burglar?
BURGLAR. Well . . . I ain't never burgled before.
GIRL. Well, that 's not so bad, *but* just the same we're going to read to you.
BURGLAR. What for?
GIRL. Because you use bad grammar.
BURGLAR. You 're funny kids. Ain' t you scared?
BOY [*magnificently*]. No!
BURGLAR [*turning suddenly*]. Huh?

[*The Boy retreats ingloriously.*]

GIRL. You would n't hurt us, would you?
BURGLAR. Why would n't I?
GIRL. We did n't do anything to you.
BURGLAR. You trapped me.
GIRL. We did n't know you were coming.
BURGLAR. What was you hiding for?
GIRL. We expected some one else.
BURGLAR. Go on!

[*The Boy moves a chair cautiously toward the Burglar and finally summons the courage to sit down beside him.*]

BOY [*pleasantly*]. Did you know Jesse James?
BURGLAR. I heard of him, but I ain't never seen him.

GIRL. What made you begin?

BURGLAR. Never mind . . . I began and I got caught. . . . Now what?

GIRL. I'm going to read to you.

BURGLAR [*resignedly*]. Go ahead.

GIRL. Do you want to read, Billie?

BOY [*unselfishly*]. No!

GIRL. This is all about the narrow path.

BURGLAR. Uh-huh.

GIRL [*reading*]. "The Narrow Path is very steep and straight. It leads to a land of gold and it is not easy to negotiate because Heaven thinks it is best for people to climb for what they want. Nevertheless —"

[*The Boy and Girl burst out laughing so suddenly that the Burglar is quite startled.*]

BURGLAR [*uneasily*]. What are you laughing at?

GIRL [*pointing to "nevertheless"*]. It 's such a funny word.

BURGLAR. Ain't it just like other words?

GIRL. Don't it look funny?

BOY. *Don't* it look funny?

GIRL. I mean does n't it look funny?

[*The three huddle together over the book.*]

BURGLAR [*muttering*]. N-E-V-E-R-T-H-E-L-E-S-S. Huh! It does look sort o' funny. . . . What 's the rest of it?

GIRL [*reading*]. "Nevertheless the narrow path is not all hardship."

BURGLAR. Maybe not; but it was pretty hard for me.

GIRL. Have you tried it?

BURGLAR. Yep. But I slipped. . . . Go on.

GIRL [*reading*]. "On the other hand, the primrose path is broad and it slopes gently downward, but it leads to the land of thorns. Neverthe — [*She turns a page*] — less —" [*Again the children go into gales of laughter.*]

BURGLAR. Huh?

GIRL. Look. [*Again they huddle over the book.*]

BURGLAR. N-E-V-E-R-T-H-E-L-E-S-S. . . . It *is* funny.
[*He joins heartily in the laughter.*]

GIRL. You see — it 's three words and they don't mean anything unless they are all huddled together just like we are now. [*They all laugh uproariously.*]

BOY [*on the friendliest of terms now*]. Do you walk the primrose path?

BURGLAR. Go on! I'm in the land of thorns.

GIRL. Well, how did you get there if you did n't walk the primrose path?

BURGLAR. I just naturally fell.

GIRL. Don't you know the meaning of "nevertheless"?

BURGLAR. I sort o' know the meaning, but I can't put it into words.

GIRL. Can you act it out?

BURGLAR. Huh?

GIRL. Can you act it out?

BURGLAR. What do you mean — act it out?

GIRL. Sometimes when Billie and I can't put things into words, we act it out. Like this: If I want to tell some one what *revolves* means, I just do this . . . and then they know.

BURGLAR. Aw, yes, you pertend!

GIRL. Oh . . . Well — Can't you p-p-pertend "nevertheless"?

BURGLAR. I hardly think so.

BOY. Did you get tired on the narrow path?

BURGLAR. Ye-eh . . . But I wish I had n't.

GIRL. Can't you climb back?

BURGLAR. Nope. It 's too late.

GIRL. Mother says it 's never too late to do right.

BURGLAR. Sure it is. A man what 's been in jail can't get straight again.

BOY [*admiringly*]. Have you been in jail?

BURGLAR. No, but once is enough.

GIRL. When are you going to jail?

BURGLAR. To-night, I guess.

BOY. What for?

BURGLAR. For breaking in here!

GIRL. We are n't going to send you to jail.

BURGLAR. Maybe not, but your paw and maw will. [*Whimsically.*] 'Sides, I can't tell you what "nevertheless" means and I can't act it out. And a compact's a compact, ain't it?

GIRL. Mother won't put you in jail. She 's too kind.

BOY [*with sad memories*]. But she 's awful strict about grammar and ugly words.

GIRL. She says it 's easy to walk the narrow path.

BOY. Father is n't so sure, but he says it *can* be done.

GIRL. Come on and we'll help you.

BURGLAR. Come on where?

BOY. Come on and walk the narrow path with us.

BURGLAR. Where is it?

GIRL. Here.

BURGLAR. What's the game?

GIRL. Mother says if we can walk a straight line out that door without wobbling, we can walk the narrow path all our lives without any trouble.

BOY. To speak of.

BURGLAR. What's on the other side of that door?

BOY and GIRL. Father and mother.

BURGLAR. You seem to be pretty straight kids, but it 's too late for me.

GIRL. No, it is n't.

BURGLAR. Yes, it 's too late. I'll take the back door and try to make my get-away.

GIRL. Billie, you ask him.

BOY. I'd like to have you come with us, sir. Dad's a fine man and mother's a great woman.

GIRL. All we have to do is to walk straight through that door without wobbling —

BOY. Come on —

BURGLAR. I think it 's too late for me — nevertheless —

[*He takes their hands.*]

GIRL [*ecstatically*]. Oh, he 's acted out "nevertheless"! Billie, don't you see the real, honest, true, live meaning? . . . Come on, let 's start.

[*They start carefully for the door and, as they come to the safe, they stop. The Burglar looks ruefully at it a moment.*]

GIRL. Don't wobble now. We've almost made it — [*They keep on for the door.*] Is n't it easy? And mother says if you can do this little bit, you can do it always.

[*When they disappear through the door, the play is over.*]

MANIKIN AND MINIKIN [1]

A Bisque-Play

By ALFRED KREYMBORG

Seen through an oval frame, one of the walls of a parlor. The wallpaper is a conventionalized pattern. Only the shelf of the mantelpiece shows. At each end, seated on pedestals turned slightly away from one another, two aristocratic bisque figures, a boy in delicate cerise and a girl in cornflower blue. Their shadows join in a grotesque silhouette. In the center, an ancient clock whose tick acts as the metronome for the sound of their high voices.

Presently, the mouths of the figures open and shut after the mode of ordinary conversation.

SHE. Manikin!
HE. Minikin?
SHE. That fool of a servant has done it again.
HE. I should say, she's more than a fool.
SHE. A meddlesome busybody —
HE. A brittle-fingered noddy!
SHE. Which way are you looking? What do you see?
HE. The everlasting armchair,
the everlasting tiger skin,
the everlasting yellow, green and purple books,
the everlasting portrait of milord —
SHE. Oh these Yankees! — and I see
the everlasting rattan rocker,
the everlasting samovar,

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the everlasting noisy piano,
the everlasting portrait of milady —
HE. Simpering spectacle!
SHE. What does she want, always dusting?
HE. I should say —
that is, I'd consider the thought —
SHE. You'd consider a lie —
oh Manikin —
you're trying to defend her!
HE. I'm not defending her —
SHE. You're trying to —
HE. I'm not trying to —
SHE. Then what are you trying to —
HE. Well, I'd venture to say,
if she'd only stay away some morning —
SHE. That's what I say in my dreams!
HE. She and her broom —
SHE. Her everlasting broom —
HE. She would n't be sweeping —
SHE. Every corner, every cranny, every crevice —
HE. And the dust would n't move —
SHE. Would n't crawl, would n't rise, would n't fly —
HE. And cover us all over —
SHE. Like a spider-web — ugh!
HE. Everlasting dust has been most of our life —
SHE. Everlasting years and years of dust!
HE. You on your lovely blue gown —
SHE. And you on your manly pink cloak.
HE. If she did n't sweep, we would n't need dusting —
SHE. Nor need taking down, I should say —
HE. With her stupid, clumsy hands —
SHE. Her crooked, monkey paws —
HE. And we would n't need putting back —
SHE. I with my back to you —
HE. I with my back to you.

SHE. It's been hours, days, weeks —
by the sound of that everlasting clock —
and the coming of day and the going of day —
since I saw you last!
HE. What's the use of the sun
with its butterfly wings of light —
what's the use of the sun made to see by —
if I can't see you!
SHE. Manikin!
HE. Minikin?
SHE. Say that again!
HE. Why should I say it again — don't you know?
SHE. I know, but sometimes I doubt —
HE. Why do you, what do you doubt?
SHE. Please say it again!
HE. What's the use of a sun —
SHE. What's the use of a sun?
HE. That was made to see by —
SHE. That was made to see by?
HE. If I can't see you!
SHE. Oh, Manikin!
HE. Minikin?
SHE. If you had n't said that again,
my doubt would have filled a balloon.
HE. Your doubt, which doubt, what doubt?
SHE. And although I can't move,
although I can't move unless somebody shoves me,
one of these days when the sun is n't here,
I would have slipped over the edge
of this everlasting shelf —
HE. Minikin!
SHE. And fallen to that everlasting floor
into so many fragments,
they'd never paste Minikin together again!
HE. Minikin, Minikin!

SHE. They'd have to set another here —
some Ninikin, I'm assured!
HE. Why do you chatter so, prattle so?
SHE. Because of my doubt —
because I'm as positive as I am
that I sit here with my knees in a knot —
that that human creature — loves you.
HE. Loves me?
SHE. And you her!
HE. Minikin!
SHE. When she takes us down she holds you much longer.
HE. Minikin!
SHE. I'm sufficiently feminine —
and certainly old enough —
I and my hundred and seventy years —
I can see, I can feel
by her manner of touching me
and her flicking me with the mop —
the creature hates me —
she'd like to drop me, that's what she would!
HE. Minikin!
SHE. Don't you venture defending her!
Booby — you don't know live women!
When I'm in the right position
I can note how she fondles you,
pets you like a parrot with her finger tip,
blows a pinch of dust from your eye
with her softest breath,
holds you off at arm's length
and fixes you with her spider look,
actually holds you against her cheek —
her rose-tinted cheek —
before she releases you!
If she did n't turn us apart so often,
I would n't charge her with insinuation;

but now I know she loves you —
she's as jealous as I am —
and poor dead me in her live power!
Manikin?

HE. Minikin?

SHE. If you could see me —
the way you see her —

HE. But I see you —
see you always —
see only you!

SHE. If you could see me
the way you see her,
you'd still love me,
you'd love me the way you do her!
Who made me what I am?
Who dreamed me in motionless clay?

HE. Minikin?

SHE. Manikin?

HE. Will you listen to me?

SHE. No!

HE. Will you listen to me?

SHE. No.

HE. Will you listen to me?

SHE. Yes.

HE. I love you —

SHE. No!

HE. I've always loved you —

SHE. No.

HE. You doubt that?

SHE. Yes!

HE. You doubt that?

SHE. Yes.

HE. You doubt that?

SHE. No.
You've always loved me —

yes —
but you don't love me now —
no —
not since that rose-face encountered your glance —
no.

HE. Minikin!

SHE. If I could move about the way she can —
if I had feet —
dainty white feet which could twinkle and twirl —
I'd dance you so prettily
you'd think me a sun butterfly —
if I could let down my hair
and prove you it's longer than larch hair —
if I could raise my black brows
or shrug my narrow shoulders,
like a queen or a countess —
if I could turn my head, tilt my head,
this way and that, like a swan —
ogle my eyes, like a peacock,
till you'd marvel,
they're green, nay, violet, nay, yellow, nay, gold —
If I could move, only move
just the moment of an inch —
you would see what I could be!
It's a change, it's a change,
you men ask of women!

HE. A change?

SHE. You're eye-sick, heart-sick
of seeing the same foolish porcelain thing,
a hundred years old
a hundred and fifty,
and sixty, and seventy —
I don't know how old I am!

HE. Not an exhalation older than I —
not an inhalation younger!
Minikin?

SHE. Manikin?
HE. Will you listen to me?
SHE. No!
HE. Will you listen to me?
SHE. No.
HE. Will you listen to me?
SHE. Yes.
HE. I don't love that creature —
SHE. You do.
HE. I can't love that creature —
SHE. You can.
HE. Will you listen to me?
SHE. Yes —
if you'll tell me —
if you'll prove me —
so my last particle of dust —
the tiniest speck of a molecule —
the merest electron —
HE. Are you listening?
SHE. Yes!
HE. To begin with —
I dislike, suspect, deplore —
I had best say, feel compassion
for what is called, humanity —
or the animate, as opposed to the inanimate —
SHE. You say that so wisely —
you're such a philosopher —
say it again!
HE. That which is able to move
can never be steadfast, you understand?
Let us consider the creature at hand
to whom you have referred
with an undue excess of admiration
adulterated with an undue excess of envy —
SHE. Say that again!

HE. To begin with —
I can only see part of her at once.
She moves into my vision;
she moves out of my vision;
she is doomed to be wayward.
SHE. Yes, but that which you see of her —
HE. Is ugly, commonplace, unsightly.
Her face a rose-face?
it's veined with blood and the skin of it wrinkles —
her eyes are ever so near to a hen's —
her movements,
if one would pay such a gait with regard —
her gait is unspeakably ungainly —
her hair —
SHE. Her hair?
HE. Luckily I've never seen it down —
I dare say it comes down in the dark,
when it looks, most assuredly, like tangled weeds —
SHE. Again, Manikin, that dulcet phrase!
HE. Even were she beautiful,
she were never so beautiful as thou!
SHE. Now you're a poet, Manikin!
HE. Even were she so beautiful as thou —
lending her your eyes,
and the exquisite head which holds them —
like a cup two last beads of wine,
like a stone two last drops of rain,
green, nay, violet, nay, yellow, nay, gold —
SHE. Faster, Manikin!
HE. I can't, Minikin!
Words were never given to man
to phrase such a one as you are —
inanimate symbols
can never embrace, embody, hold
the animate dream that you are —
I must cease.

SHE. Manikin!
HE. And even were she so beautiful as thou,
she could n't stay beautiful.
SHE. Stay beautiful?
HE. Humans change with each going moment.
That is a gray-haired platitude.
Just as I can see that creature
only when she touches my vision,
so I could only see her once, were she beautiful —
at best, twice or thrice —
you're more precious than when you came!
SHE. And you!
HE. Human pathos penetrates still deeper
when one determines their inner life,
as we've pondered their outer.
Their inner changes far more desperately.
SHE. How so, wise Manikin?
HE. They have what philosophy terms, moods,
and moods are more pervious to modulation
than pools to idle breezes.
These people may say, to begin with —
I love you.
This may be true, I'm assured —
as true as when *we* say, I love you.
But they can only say,
I love you,
so long as the mood breathes,
so long as the breezes blow,
so long as water remains wet.
They are honest —
they mean what they say —
passionately, tenaciously, tragically —
but when the mood languishes,
they have to say,
if it be they are honest —

I do not love you.
Or they have to say,
I love you,
to somebody else.

SHE. To somebody else?

HE. Now, you and I —
we've said that to each other —
we've had to say it
for a hundred and seventy years —
and we'll have to say it, always.

SHE. Say always again!

HE. The life of an animate —

SHE. Say always again!

HE. Always!
The life of an animate
is a procession of deaths
with but a secret sorrowing candle,
guttering lower and lower,
on the path to the grave —
the life of an inanimate
is as serenely enduring —
as all still things are.

SHE. Still things?

HE. Recall our childhood in the English museum —
ere we were moved,
from place to place,
to this dreadful Yankee salon —
do you remember
that little old Greek tanagra
of the girl with a head like a bud —
that little old Roman medallion
of the girl with a head like a —

SHE. Manikin, Manikin —
were they so beautiful as I —
did you love them, too —
why do you bring them back?

HE. They were not so beautiful as thou —
I spoke of them —
recalled, designated them —
well, because they were ages old —
and — and —
SHE. And — and?
HE. And we might live as long as they —
as they did and do!
I hinted their existence
because they're not so beautiful as thou,
so that by contrast and deduction —
SHE. And deduction?
HE. You know what I'd say —
SHE. But say it again!
HE. I love you.
SHE. Manikin?
HE. Minikin?
SHE. Then even though that creature has turned us apart,
can you see me?
HE. I can see you.
SHE. Even though you have n't seen me
for hours, days, weeks —
with your dear blue eyes —
you can see me —
with your hidden ones?
HE. I can see you.
SHE. Even though you are still,
and calm, and smooth,
and lovely outside —
you are n't still and calm
and smooth and lovely inside?
HE. Lovely, yes —
but not still and calm and smooth!
SHE. Which way are you looking? What do you see?
HE. I look at you.
I see you.

SHE. And if that fool of a servant —
oh, Manikin —
suppose she should break the future —
our great, happy centuries ahead —
by dropping me, throwing me down?
HE. I should take an immediate step
off this everlasting shelf —
SHE. But you cannot move!
HE. The good wind would give me a blow!
SHE. Now you're a punster!
And what would your fragments do?
HE. They'd do what Manikin did.
SHE. Say that again!
HE. They'd do what Manikin did.
SHE. Manikin?
HE. Minikin?
SHE. Shall I tell you something?
HE. Tell me something.
SHE. Are you listening?
HE. With my inner ears.
SHE. I was n't jealous of that woman —
HE. You were n't jealous?
SHE. I wanted to hear you talk —
HE. You wanted to hear me talk?
SHE. You talk so wonderfully!
HE. Do I, indeed? What a booby I am!
SHE. And I wanted to hear you say —
HE. You cheat, you idler, you —
SHE. Woman —
HE. Dissembler!
SHE. Manikin?
HE. Minikin?
SHE. Everlastingly?
HE. Everlastingly.
SHE. Say it again!

HE. I refuse —
SHE. You refuse?
HE. Well —
SHE. Well?
HE. You have ears outside your head -
I'll say that for you —
but they'll never hear —
what your other ears hear!
SHE. Say it —
down one of the ears —
outside my head?
HE. I refuse.
SHE. You refuse?
HE. Leave me alone.
SHE. Manikin?
HE. I can't say it!
SHE. Manikin!

[*The clock goes on ticking for a moment. Its mellow chimes strike the hour.*]

CURTAIN

THE BEAU OF BATH[1]

By CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

CHARACTERS

BEAU NASH.
JEPSON, *his servant.*
THE LADY OF THE PORTRAIT.

PLACE: *Bath.*
TIME: *Christmas Eve, 1750.*
SCENE: *A room in the Beau's apartment.*

Furniture and hangings of faded splendor. Candles gleam in silver sconces. Christmas holly hangs here and there. At the left burns a fire on the hearth, first with small blue dancing flames, then deepening to a rosy glow.

At the right there is an inlaid desk with candles burning on it. Toward background a door opening into another room of the apartment.

In the center background hangs the life-sized portrait of a lady dressed in the fashion of the early eighteenth century. Her dress is a shimmer of rose-colored satin. Beneath her faintly powdered hair her face is young, dawn-tinted, starry-eyed. There are no other portraits in the room.

At the rise of the curtain Beau Nash is discovered seated at a round lacquered table, center foreground. He is an old man, still very erect and stately, very much the great dandy. The soft light of the room hides whatever ravages of time there may be in his face. It also hides the

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fact that the seams of the black velvet suit he is wearing are growing gray, and that the creamy lace ruffles that grace his sleeves and jabot have been very often mended. Near him stands his servant, an old man slightly stooped, wearing a shabby brown cloth suit with a buff vest and tarnished gold buttons. He looks at his master adoringly.

JEPSON. And is that all, sir?

BEAU NASH. Bring my snuffbox. So!
Where are the cards?

JEPSON [*bringing a pack of cards on a silver tray*]. Here, sir.

BEAU NASH. Now you may go. [*Jepson pauses.*]
You hesitate?

JEPSON [*with feeling*]. Why, sir, I'm loath to see
You sitting here alone.

BEAU NASH. This room, for me,
Is filled with memories.

JEPSON. Aye, sir, I know.
I've served you thirty years and seen the flow
And ebb of fortune, and I cannot bear
Night after night to —

BEAU NASH. Jepson, all that's fair
Passes and fades. Even the eagle's wings
Grow slow with age. Content with little things
Is wisest.

[*Jepson fetches a score pad and pencil from the desk, and stands waiting with them at his master's table.*]

JEPSON. Yes, sir.

BEAU NASH [*watching fire*]. See how strangely blue
The little flames are. *If it should be true . . .*

JEPSON [*puzzled*]. Sir?

BEAU NASH. That a spell is wrought by candle light
And gleaming flame when it shines faintly bright.
When hours grow small and embers lower burn

On Christmas night they say old loves return.
'T is merely folly, Jepson. Ne'er again
Shall I behold that brilliant courtly train
Of wits and beauties, fops and gamesters gay —
All that made life in Bath when I held sway.
Time was, my nod would stop the Prince's dance:
A belle was made by my admiring glance:
'T was I who set the fashions in brocade,
But — laurels wither and the roses fade,
And now I sit alone. My reign is done.
The wits and fops have vanished one by one.

JEPSON [*moved*]. You were the King of all, sir. High and low
Admired you.

BEAU NASH. Thank you, Jepson.
[*Takes score pad and pencil*].
You may go.

[*Exit Jepson, left, quietly and reluctantly, with a backward glance at his master who still dreams at fire.*]

Everything passes. Naught remains of all
Except that portrait smiling from the wall.
[*He crosses to the portrait, candlestick in hand.*]
Disdainful Rosamond, you still look down
As when you were the toast of all the town.
Lips red as holly, eyes so archly bright —
Nay, but your beauty dims the candle's light!
[*He puts down the candlestick.*]
'T is vain to wish for things that may not be;
Yet could you for one hour come back to me
Would I not say all that I left unsaid
In days gone by? But you are long since dead,
While I, grown old, above the embers cower,
[*He goes back to his chair.*]
Or play a game to help me pass the hour

When shadows flicker . . . and the candles blink
Until I drowse . . . and . . .

[*He nods and dozes in his chair. The Lady of the Portrait moves, smiles, slowly and gracefully steps down from the portrait, silently crosses to the table, her eyes on the Beau. She catches up a handful of cards.*]

THE LADY. 'T is my play, I think
If I see rightly by the candle's gleam.

BEAU NASH [*in a whisper*]. *Rosamond!*

THE LADY [*lightly*]. Well, sir, do you always dream
When you play cards with ladies? If 't is so
I think 't were best to call my chair and go.

BEAU NASH [*bewildered, passing a hand across his eyes*]. I thought . . . that you were dead . . . and I was old!

THE LADY [*still lightly*]. Fie, sir, to think that hearts like ours grow cold!
And when I hear you call upon my name
Shall I not step down from that gilded frame
To spend an hour of Christmas night with you?
Come! Let us gossip of the folk we knew!
Lord Foppington, whose wit I did adore —

BEAU NASH. I thought Lord Foppington a monstrous bore!
But Kitty Cavendish — 'Faith, one mad night
We drank her health from out her slipper white.

THE LADY [*with spirit*]. I vow then you were tipsy, one and all,
For Kitty's slipper was by no means small.

BEAU NASH. Nay, let 's have done with thrust and counter thrust!
Ah, Rosamond, in days gone by you must
Have known I loved you, yet you were so cold.

THE LADY [*very low*]. I had been warmer, sir, had you been bold!

BEAU NASH. Bold! At your feet dukes laid their coronets,
I could but offer you some gambling debts.
These, and the worship of a world-worn heart
Would scarce pass coinage in Dame Fashion's mart.
So I fought down my love for you, and yet
Your slightest gesture in the minuet
Would stir my pulses. With a covert glance
I watched you through the mazes of the dance,
So fair, so radiant — But what need for me
To tell you of my heart's poor comedy.
Is that a tear which falls for it, my sweet?

THE LADY [*very sweetly and gently*]. A tear is naught, sir.
[*She turns to him.*]
Ah, must I repeat
My love in *words* before you will believe
That I too loved in vain?
[*As their eyes meet her meaning grows clear to him.*]
Now I must leave,
For 't is not long until the clock strikes one.

BEAU NASH. And you loved me!

THE LADY. Our hour is almost done.
I leave you to your firelight and your chair,
And to your game that's always — solitaire!

[*With delicate tread, moving silently as a ghost, the Lady steps back into the portrait. The Beau dozes again. The rosy glow of the fire dies, leaving the room in utter twilight. Jepson enters.*]

JEPSON. 'T is bedtime, sir. The clock struck long ago.
The embers on the hearth are burning low.
Even the wav'ring candle feebly gleams.

BEAU NASH [*with a startled glance about the shadowy room*].
So late! . . . So dim! . . . I have been dreaming —
Dreams!

THE CURTAIN SLOWLY FALLS

THE UNSEEN HOST[1]

By PERCIVAL WILDE

CHARACTERS

THE SURGEON.
THE VISITOR.
THE ORDERLY.

SCENE: *At an improvised American hospital in Paris, during the World War. A large room, with the traces of former magnificence, now serving as living room to the surgeon in charge. At the rear, tall Gothic windows of leaded glass — heavily curtained. At the right, two doors, huge, ancient — that nearer the audience leading into an interior room: that farther off opening on the upper landing of a staircase. At the left, an enormous fireplace. What little furniture there is is massive and ornate. The most conspicuous piece is a heavy table near the center of the room. On the table is a bronze desk lamp.*

It is evening. In the room itself no lights are burning, and there is semi-darkness.

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Mr. Arthur Machen's convincing tale of "The Bowmen" was in the dramatist's mind when he wrote this play. The legend of how St. George and the bowmen of Agincourt came to the relief of the hard pressed English Army at the battle of Mons "is accepted as truth by a startlingly large number of people.... One is inclined to forget," writes Mr. Wilde, "that Mr. Machen evolved them out of thin air, and that their only authentic appearance is in his pages."

The first door opens, and a uniformed orderly enters quietly. He is a middle-aged man who lacks an arm; the medal on his breast may explain why. He deposits a sheaf of papers on the table; proceeds to the windows and closes the curtains.

Steps are heard ascending the stairs, the second door opens, and the surgeon, a white-clad, elderly American who holds himself very erect despite his years, stands at the threshold deferentially awaiting a compatriot some ten years his junior, the best type of the successful American man of affairs.

THE SURGEON [*holding the door open*]. This way.

THE VISITOR [*appearing at the head of the flight of stairs*]. *Is* he in here?

THE SURGEON. Who?

THE VISITOR. The boy who saw the angels?

THE SURGEON [*smiling*]. Oh, you have n't forgotten him, have you? He 's in the next room. [*The visitor enters, obviously winded by the climb.*] I'll show him to you afterwards. Get your breath first. You look a little exhausted.

THE VISITOR [*grinning*]. A little? Quite a little

THE SURGEON. Sit down here. [*The orderly proffers a chair. The visitor sits. The surgeon turns on the desk lamp.*] This house was built before the Grand Monarque taught them to have an eye to comfort. Magnificent — splendid — all that sort of thing, but mighty unpleasant if you have to live in it. Think of the stretcher bearers carrying men up those stairs!

THE VISITOR. There ought to be an elevator.

THE SURGEON. Yes.

THE VISITOR. Put one in. Send me the bill.

THE SURGEON [*nodding*]. Thank you. We need it badly. [*The orderly leaves the room by the first door.*] These old houses, very picturesque, very ornamental —

THE VISITOR. But no conveniences?

THE SURGEON. The men who built them did n't know the meaning of the word. We felt that when we turned this into a hospital. Think of it: it used to be a show place! Not much left of it now. There was a bed here — right where you are sitting; one of those great, big, canopied affairs —

THE VISITOR. Unsanitary.

THE SURGEON. Very. That's why I had it taken out. But Henry of Navarre had spent a night in it.

THE VISITOR. Even Henry of Navarre had to give way to modern efficiency!

THE SURGEON [*nodding*]. Yes. [*He points to the door through which the orderly has gone.*] That was his anteroom the next morning. Can you picture it? The courtiers: the crowds of lords and ladies: the nobility of France waiting to greet His Majesty!

THE VISITOR [*strolling over*]. Nothing like that to-day, is there?

THE SURGEON [*opening the door*]. I don't know. Look! the rows of beds, and the quiet men who are lying in them. The nobility of France? Those painted and befrilled lords and ladies were no whit more noble than are these! [*He pauses.*] The King's anteroom! It is more that now than it ever was!

THE VISITOR [*understandingly*]. Waiting to meet His Majesty.

THE SURGEON [*closing the door quietly*]. I did n't know you were a poet. But it does n't need much of this atmosphere to change a man's view of life. It's intoxicating. [*He turns.*] From these windows you could have watched the murders of the Huguenots three hundred and fifty years ago. Twenty years later you would have seen a Huguenot king going to sleep in this room. Why, I could talk about the place for hours! What wonderful

men and women have sat where we are sitting! What a glorious company has passed through these moldering doors! What ghosts hover about us while we speak!

[*The visitor starts violently.*]

THE SURGEON. What is it?

THE VISITOR. I thought I heard something.

THE SURGEON [*smiling*]. They are friendly ghosts. [*Shrewdly.*] But you said before that you did n't believe in them!

THE VISITOR. Neither I do.

THE SURGEON. Or angels?

THE VISITOR. Call them what you like.

THE SURGEON. Well, then?

THE VISITOR. I thought I saw something. [*Apologetically.*] The light is so dim.

THE SURGEON. The men in the next room don't like bright lights.

THE VISITOR. But you can keep the door closed.

THE SURGEON [*shaking his head*]. It won't stay closed. It 's rickety — like everything else in the building. [*He crosses to the windows.*] I'll open the curtains if you like.

THE VISITOR [*watching him*]. Are n't you afraid of the Zeppelins?

THE SURGEON. Too much of a fatalist for that. They were here a week ago.

THE VISITOR. And did n't hurt you?

THE SURGEON. Blew up yards and yards of pavement with the result that we had to lay wooden boards in the street. The hospital was n't damaged.

THE VISITOR [*evidently referring to a previous conversation*]. Another miracle!

THE SURGEON. What?

THE VISITOR [*mildly bantering*]. You seem to live in the midst of the supernatural!

THE SURGEON [*nodding gravely*]. Yes.

THE VISITOR. And you were born in Bangor, Maine, and studied medicine at Johns Hopkins!

THE SURGEON [*after a pause*]. You are a Christian, I take it?

THE VISITOR. Why — naturally.

THE SURGEON. You believe that a miracle happened in Palestine. You deny that another might happen in Flanders.

THE VISITOR [*uneasily*]. Well, if you put it *that* way —

THE SURGEON. Now I'm going to read you the boy's statement.

[*He sits at the table, and goes through the contents of one of the drawers. The first door opens slowly. The visitor watches it, fascinated. He draws his breath sharply. The surgeon looks up; takes in the situation.*]

THE VISITOR. The door's opening!

THE SURGEON. I warned you; it has a habit of doing that.

[*The orderly enters through the opened door, crosses to the other door, goes. The visitor draws a breath of relief.*]

THE SURGEON [*smiling*]. For a disbeliever you are easily startled. [*The visitor does not reply.*] Now listen. [*He reads.*] "I saw them. I know I saw them. Whether they were angels, whether they were devils, whether they were living or dead, I do not know. But they were shining shapes, and nothing could withstand them. We were pressed — hard pressed. Another ten minutes, and it would have been all over with us. We would have been crushed by the advancing hordes, trodden under into the mire. And then I heard a tramping, a tramping gradually growing louder, a tramping first challenging the roar of the battle, and then overwhelming it, drowning it, so that all sound had become one huge rhythmic tramp, tramp, tramp! I thought my

eardrums would burst. And then I looked up and beheld the light reflected on their armor, and the sky filled with a huge glitter, and the rays of the sun shining through showers of arrows! And the enemy melted away before us: melted by the hundreds; by the thousands; by the tens of thousands; and those celestial hosts tramped upwards, tramped up that invisible pathway into the heavens, tramped out of sight!" [*He stops.*]

THE VISITOR [*after a pause*]. And then?

THE SURGEON. Then a bullet struck him, and he was unconscious until they brought him here.

THE VISITOR [*after another pause; emphasizing the inconsistency*]. Tramping ghosts!

THE SURGEON. Why not?

THE VISITOR [*positively*]. Ghosts are noiseless.

THE SURGEON [*shrewdly*]. If you speak from experience —

THE VISITOR [*nettled*]. I did n't say I believed in them.

THE SURGEON [*innocently*]. No; you said quite the opposite.

THE VISITOR [*dogmatically*]. Anyhow, ghosts don't tramp!

THE SURGEON [*gently bantering*]. Not even a ghostly tramp? They clank chains, I am told. Why should n't their steps have a sound? A sort of a hollow, ghostly sound?

THE VISITOR. Bah! Are you sure the bullet struck him *after* he saw the — the angels?

THE SURGEON. So he says.

THE VISITOR. Hm! And you take *his* word for it! [*He walks over to the door.*] Dying, you say?

THE SURGEON. Three quarters dead already.

THE VISITOR. And young?

THE SURGEON. Nineteen — one of thousands. Oh, it's not romantic in the least. He's barely conscious; and he's waiting to go back to the front. He thinks he's going to get well.

THE VISITOR. They all think that, don't they? He won't?

THE SURGEON. Never in *this* world. Queer, is n't it? Shot clean through the body; suffering like the devil, and all he's thinking of is when he's to go back — when he's to rejoin his regiment!

THE VISITOR. Like an animal trying to return to the slaughter pen.

THE SURGEON [*pointedly*]. Yes: if animals saw angels.

THE VISITOR. Hm! [*He pauses.*] Do you really believe he saw them?

THE SURGEON. I read you his statement.

THE VISITOR. Which he wrote himself?

THE SURGEON. Hardly; he knows no English.

THE VISITOR. Why did n't you take it down in the original?

THE SURGEON. I did. [*He produces a second sheet of paper.*] Here it is. [*He pauses; smiles.*] I translated it, paraphrased it, for my own pleasure, if you like. The original is a mass of ejaculations; short phrases, repeated over and over again. I tried to make it coherent.

THE VISITOR. And repeated it back to him? [*The surgeon shakes his head.*] Why not?

THE SURGEON. He takes no notice of anything.

THE VISITOR. Oh! Not quite in his senses?

THE SURGEON. No.

THE VISITOR. Raving? And you believe his ravings?

THE SURGEON. I neither believe nor disbelieve.

THE VISITOR. But an insane man?

THE SURGEON [*with emphasis*]. Who has not had the education to *invent* what he told me! Imaginative? Not in the least. He was a farm hand before the war.

THE VISITOR [*persistently*]. Still, in his delirium —

THE SURGEON [*interrupting*]. He would n't rave like a poet. You forget: I have listened to so many others. [*He pauses.*] You think I am credulous. Perhaps. I neither affirm nor deny. They tell me of these things they call miracles —

THE VISITOR [*interrupting*]. And you ask no explanation?

THE SURGEON. Why must there be one?

THE VISITOR. There always is.

THE SURGEON. Yes; generally more miraculous than the miracle itself. [*He pauses; then, with solemnity.*] When, in the twentieth century, I myself have seen millions of men leaving their peaceful homes, their work, their occupations, to kill one another, I say that is such a dreadful, such an unbelievable miracle that next to it everything else becomes insignificant. If this paperweight were to turn into a roaring lion before my eyes I would say that too was a miracle — but that all of humanity had been witness to a greater!

[*The first door opens slowly.*]

THE VISITOR [*calling attention to it without alarm*]. The door is opening again.

[*The surgeon goes to it without a word; closes it.*]

THE VISITOR [*as he does so*]. *You* would say that the soul of the dying soldier has come through that door on its way to rejoin its regiment!

THE SURGEON [*nodding gravely*]. If I were a poet.

[*As he speaks the second door opens deliberately. He watches it with a smile; the visitor with curious fascination.*]

THE VISITOR. Gad! [*The door closes of its own accord.*]

THE VISITOR [*repeating as if hypnotized*]. To rejoin its regiment!

THE SURGEON [*after a pause*]. You did n't notice —

THE VISITOR [*sharply*]. What?

THE SURGEON [*mildly*]. To me — the room seemed somewhat lighter for an instant.

THE VISITOR. Bah!

THE SURGEON. A poetic conception of yours: the soul joins the regiment of souls! All around us — above us — within us — the unseen host gathers its forces!

[*There is the very, very faint sound of a bugle in the distance.*]

THE VISITOR [*under his breath*]. Did you hear?

THE SURGEON. I heard.

THE VISITOR. A bugle!

THE SURGEON. Yes.

[*They listen, and gradually there commences a curious, hollow, rhythmic tramp. Very subdued at first, it increases slowly in volume, without in the least accelerating its precise, martial rhythm. It grows louder, and louder, and louder; and nearer. The building seems to vibrate with the rhythmically recurrent footfall. The visitor rushes to the windows. He peers out. Then, in a tone of awe:*]

THE VISITOR. Fog! Nothing but fog!

[*Utterly bewildered, he turns. The tramping swells into a climax. Then, more quickly than it has grown, ebbs into silence.*]

THE VISITOR [*breathlessly*]. What was it?

THE SURGEON. A regiment marching by.

THE VISITOR. But the tramp? The hollow tramp?

THE SURGEON [*very matter of fact*]. I told you — there is a board pavement.

THE VISITOR [*breaking into a high-pitched, hysterical laugh*]. So there is! So there is!

[*The second door opens, and the orderly, very much excited, stands on the threshold.*]

THE ORDERLY. Doctor!

THE SURGEON. Yes?

THE ORDERLY. The boy — the boy who saw the angels — where is he?

THE SURGEON. In there.

THE ORDERLY. You are sure?

[*The men look at each other silently.*]

THE SURGEON. Why do you ask?

THE ORDERLY. I saw him!

THE VISITOR. What?

THE ORDERLY. In the front ranks! With my own eyes! I saw him! [*The surgeon hurries out of the room.*]

THE VISITOR [*after a tense pause*]. He was dying. Did you know that?

THE ORDERLY [*gravely*]. I knew.

[*The surgeon reënters.*]

THE VISITOR. Well?

THE SURGEON [*nodding quietly*]. Dead.

THE ORDERLY. I saw him! With my own eyes I saw him!

THE SURGEON. Dead not five minutes.

THE VISITOR [*staggered*]. But — but such things don't happen! There were thousands of boys like him!

THE SURGEON [*slowly*]. Yes.

THE VISITOR [*turning fiercely on the orderly*]. You must have been mistaken—!

THE ORDERLY [*changing the word pointedly*]. I *might* have been mistaken.

THE SURGEON. Then, again, you might *not* have been —

[*The orderly nods quietly, understandingly. The visitor gasps. . . .*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS SLOWLY

THE SHOES THAT DANCED [1]

By ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

CHARACTERS

LANCRET, *a pupil of Watteau.*
COURTIN, *an artist.*
FAUSTINE, PIERRETTE, } *ballet dancers.*
WATTEAU.
COLUMBINE.
A BOY.
A PAGE.
THE QUEEN.
A LADY-IN-WAITING.

SCENE: *Watteau's Studio. Lancret is working at a painting. Watteau's portrait of the Queen, which has recently gained for him the appointment of Court Painter, occupies a prominent position. There is a burst of singing, a clamor of voices, and Pierrette and Faustine, accompanied by Courtin, frolic into the studio.*

VOICES [*singing outside*].

Blossoms perish in the snow!
Columbine won't kiss Pierrot. [*Shouts.*]
The New Academician!
Court Favorite!

[*Enter Courtin with Faustine and Pierrette.*]

ALL [*singing*].

Blossoms floating in the wine,
Harlequin loved Columbine!

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COURTIN. Watteau!
FAUSTINE. Where is Watteau?
LANCRET. He's out.
PIERRETTE. To-day?
FAUSTINE. Why, sir, to-day the queen comes to the studio
To see her portrait!
COURTIN [*looking at Watteau's portrait of the Queen*]. Oh, majestic Lady!
With all her pride and beauty painted here
As real as life. Insolent loveliness!
And in her hands — for woman's vanity —
Watteau has sketched the world! What she will have,
That she will have, — most arrogant of queens,
That never knew denial. God himself
Refuses her not anything at all
Save lovely meekness. So in very truth
This Lady has for hers the great round world
To give or take.
FAUSTINE. To-day she only gives,
And Watteau has the bounty.
COURTIN [*saluting the portrait*]. To the queen —
That rescued him from an oblivion
Thick as Egyptian darkness. Yesterday
He hired out to a confectioner
And painted little Cupids upon bonbons —
PIERRETTE. On bonbons!
FAUSTINE. Cupids!
PIERRETTE. Watteau's masterpieces!
COURTIN. To buy him bread.
LANCRET. Or painted — Columbines!
FAUSTINE [*indignantly*]. The Columbine!
PIERRETTE. What is there in that creature
That artists all pursue her!
FAUSTINE [*humming*].
Blossoms lead the April in!
Columbine flounced Harlequin!

COURTIN. Now fortune changes, and in one brief day
This portrait charms the eye of royalty,
And makes Watteau the painter to the queen.
FAUSTINE [*in acclamation*]. Watteau!
PIERRETTE [*joyously*]. Court painter!
COURTIN. Lancret, you are silent.
LANCRET. I am at work.
FAUSTINE. On what, Monsieur Lancret?
LANCRET. I paint — the queen.
FAUSTINE. Like great Watteau!
COURTIN. Disciple!
You catch the master's spirit.
LANCRET [*morosely*]. No — not yet! —
The dance, the dream, the fire, the poised music!

[*Watteau enters the studio, and joins the group unseen.*]

If I could see his heart —
WATTEAU. Look to your own.
FAUSTINE. Watteau!
LANCRET. The master!
WATTEAU. To your own, I say.
And find perchance some spelling writ thereon
By the hand of God. 'T will prove instructive, maybe,
As aught of mine.
LANCRET [*pointing to Watteau's portrait*]. Nay, master, I can never
Accomplish — *that.*
WATTEAU. True! Who in all the world
Can paint such splendor? I am the one Watteau
That Heaven has achieved.
And yet — poor humdrum!
Thou art not what I dreamed! What is success?
Since all our triumphs are but shadows at noon
Whereby we measure failure. Let it be!
I hate the work of my hands. I am not like God.
I look upon it and do not find it good.

LANCRET. Not good!
FAUSTINE [*gazing at portrait*]. I beg of you, Monsieur Watteau,
Paint *me!*
PIERRETTE. Yes — make us beautiful, Watteau —
The little ballet dancers!
FAUSTINE. Oh, Watteau!
Have you grown scornful now you go to court?
PIERRETTE. He only strives to please great ladies!
FAUSTINE. Called
To deck the boudoir of the queen with Cupids!
PIERRETTE. To charm her walls with fauns that dance!
FAUSTINE. To wreathe
Her fan with roses!
WATTEAU. No.
LANCRET. To what then, master,
Has the queen summoned great Watteau?
WATTEAU. My friend,
The queen has bade me to the Sistine Chapel —
FAUSTINE. Never!
PIERRETTE. For what?
COURTIN. What would she have you paint?
WATTEAU. A great Madonna.
FAUSTINE. *You!*
PIERRETTE. *Watteau!*
COURTIN. But man —
To paint — Madonnas!
WATTEAU. Well —
COURTIN. Who could have thought
Watteau had dreamed of this!
WATTEAU. Yet I have dreamed!
COURTIN. But can you do it?
WATTEAU. [*Producing from a box a pair of satin slippers, exquisitely painted, and handing one of them to Courtin.*] Look!

COURTIN. But this is —
WATTEAU. Shoes!
FAUSTINE. A lady's slipper!
COURTIN. Watteau turned shoemaker!
PIERRETTE. Blue satin!
COURTIN. For some foolish girl to dance in.
LANCRET. What craft!
WATTEAU. I painted Cupids round the edge.
COURTIN. But man —
LANCRET. He 's mad. Let him alone.
WATTEAU. Why so?
LANCRET. These figures are perfect!
WATTEAU. That is what I thought.
COURTIN. It 's worth a thousand francs!
WATTEAU. Indeed!
COURTIN. A thousand?
It 's worth a fortune! Show it to the queen,
For what she covets that she surely buys.
LANCRET. The fineness of it! 'T is a masterpiece.
COURTIN. You can do all things!
FAUSTINE. Rosebuds — butterflies —
And little Cupids round and round about.
LANCRET. How nonchalant he is!
COURTIN. Watteau, you fool
Be all distraught with it! Roll a frenzied eye!
Shout out, "I did it!" Be inebriate
With the cup of glory. Stagger splendidly.
Shout out, "I did it!"
WATTEAU. Have you seen the sole?
LANCRET [*turning shoe over*]. A Madonna!
FAUSTINE. Ah!
COURTIN. Watteau, this little shoe
Is filled with fortune — painted o'er with fame
And immortality.
WATTEAU. You compliment me.

LANCRET. You were born for greatness.
WATTEAU. Yes.
LANCRET [*examining painting*]. But what a face!
WATTEAU. That is my dream, to fill the Sistine Chapel.
COURTIN. There 's nothing out of reach. The crucifixion!
Archangels! Ah — but how that blazoned chapel
Will roar with fiery wings!
FAUSTINE. Drawn on the sole!
WATTEAU. What would you?
COURTIN. Sketched upon a block of gold
In lasting lineaments. Why, satin, man,
Is a most fragile substance.
WATTEAU. So they say.
PIERRETTE. But one time round upon a polished floor
Will ruin this splendor.
WATTEAU. That 's the beauty of it.
PIERRETTE. But a Madonna!
COURTIN. On a lady's slipper!
WATTEAU. To show that she for whom I made this shoe
Owns all my craftsmanship! I painted them
For Columbine to dance in —
LANCRET [*jealously*]. Columbine!
COURTIN [*enthusiastically*]. The prettiest dancer in the whole ballet!
Rosebuds and Cupids, flower o' thistle down.

[*Enter Columbine wrapped in a scarlet mantle.*]

Most fragile, fine spun, silver, fitful, fair —
COLUMBINE. I thank you, good Courtin! Come here, Pierrette.
Take off my mantle.
PIERRETTE. I will not touch it.
COLUMBINE. How?
She 's jealous! Faustine?
[*Faustine makes a gesture of refusal. Lancret and Courtin assist in taking mantle.*]

Thank you, gentlemen.

[*She shines resplendent in a ballet gown.*]

I came between the acts of the rehearsal.
The queen will be there when I dance to-night.
Pray you, does anybody like my gown?

COURTIN. We all admire it.

PIERRETTE. Oh, I hate this girl!

COLUMBINE. She says she hates me!

FAUSTINE. This air stifles me.

COLUMBINE. I make her sick! The good Lord made me so.
Is it naughty, then, to be so beautiful?
Monsieur Watteau — and have you any news?

WATTEAU. Look at this portrait.

[*Displays portrait of Queen holding in her hands the world.*]

COLUMBINE. Well?

WATTEAU. So slight a thing —
Yet it has brought me wealth, preferment, honor!
And that great world I painted in her hands
She gives to me.

COLUMBINE. What — does she —

WATTEAU. Listen, child.
I am made Court Painter.

COLUMBINE [*as if startled*]. Oh, Monsieur Lancret!

WATTEAU. The queen has bade me to the Sistine Chapel
To paint — Madonnas.

COLUMBINE [*indifferently*]. But, Monsieur Watteau,
Where are the slippers that you promised me
To dance in?

WATTEAU. Child — but hear me for a moment.
This is the day when all my dreams come true,
And Poverty no longer with a sword
Bids Watteau back from that high Paradise
Wherein are mighty deeds. My hour has come.

Great barren walls that cry aloud for wings!
How I will blazon them with the vast glories
Of Heaven and Earth and Purgatory and Hell!

COLUMBINE. Watteau! The painted slippers!

WATTEAU. Columbine,
Just for a moment hear me — and rejoice!
Be glad for me. My dreams rush on like tempests
Full of great sound and fire. Heaven calls me.
Raphael says come, and Michael Angelo
Thunders affection from St. Peter's Dome.
The air is full of flaming robes of Titian,
And pale sweet faces of Leonardo. Rembrandt
Disturbs my slumber! All the mighty visions
I have dreamed of so long, — the wings, the haloes, —
And high above the altar, pale with glory,
My great Madonna —

COLUMBINE. Watteau — my satin slippers.

WATTEAU [*putting them in her hands*]. Then take them.

COLUMBINE. Beautiful!

WATTEAU. Rosebuds and Cupids!

COLUMBINE. I'll dance before the queen.

COURTIN. Nay — on the sole
Is sketched his masterpiece.

COLUMBINE [*examining sole*]. What —

WATTEAU. The Madonna.

COLUMBINE. Painted for me! Oh! if the queen could see them
How she would envy them — the satin slippers,
That are the ballet dancer's — Columbine's.

[*Shouts are heard outside.*]

VOICES [*outside*]. Watteau! Watteau! Court Painter!

[*Boy runs in.*]

BOY. Sir, the guild
Of Paris Artists, outside in the street —

VOICES [*outside*]. Watteau!
BOY. Would honor you!
VOICES. Watteau!
COURTIN [*to Watteau*]. Out, then,
And quiet them.

[*Watteau goes out with all but Columbine and Lancret, who remain in the studio.*]

VOICES [*outside*]. Watteau!
COLUMBINE. Monsieur Lancret,
I will be frank with you, since time is brief.
LANCRET [*wearily*]. So frankness has a reason, Columbine?
COLUMBINE. But tease me not. This portrait rivals Watteau's.
I could not tell the difference.
LANCRET. I have stolen,
As a beggar steals a cloak to hide his rags,
A purple garment for my shabby talent.
The master's style.
COLUMBINE. Who can do, may do, Lancret.
I want the world for you.
LANCRET. Frail Columbine —
Purchased with glories!
COLUMBINE. Glory I will have!
And stars to drink from and the sky to dance on.
Yes, shod with wind, this Columbine would dance,
Dance, dance for centuries. Listen, Lancret,
I die without my splendors. Lancret, listen.
Do you desire me?
LANCRET. Child, what are you worth?
COLUMBINE. I love you, Lancret!
LANCRET. Love?
COLUMBINE. But I have labored
To bring you fortune. Coaxed the great sad painter,
That loves not women but loves Columbine,
To teach you for my sake his mellow glories.

How I have seen you learning day by day
The master's powers and to this very end,
That you should be — hush! Longed to smile on you,
Yet dared not, lest he see and understand.
My protégé I called you. A light boy
Worth helping only — a sort of studio spaniel
I liked to keep about me. So I won
His favor for you and the golden teachings
Watteau sells at no price but gives to you
To please — the Columbine. Oh, I have dreamed
Of honors, honors — such as the world can give —

LANCRET. And stolen from Watteau.

COLUMBINE. Listen, Lancret,
At the opera all the dancers talk of you —
Lancret — the new Apollo. At the court
Mademoiselle Felise, who dresses hair,
Tells me the boudoirs speak the name of Lancret
Like a love spell. A wit, a beau, a gallant,
Gay chevalier — a genius too — great Lancret!

LANCRET. I will not listen.

COLUMBINE. But to-day the queen
Will come to see her portrait, and if then
She chanced to look on yours —

LANCRET. Beside Watteau's
How pale it is!

COLUMBINE. But if the master's hand
Coaxed by the Columbine should touch your portrait
With divine magic — often he has done so,
To make his meaning clear of light and shadow —
And if the queen — they tell me queens are fickle —

LANCRET. Even like Columbine?

COLUMBINE. But if the queen
Should see it — *then* —

LANCRET. I cannot listen.

COLUMBINE. Nay —

What if the master in a tempestuous mood
Of black despair, such absolute distaste
As takes him like a madness and undoes him
And what he makes — why, I have seen him burn
A masterpiece one bargained for in vain,
And he half starved, because he said it lacked
Some light, some music, the angels told him what!
You know the moods I mean. Well — if Watteau,
In such a spirit —

LANCRET. Hush!

COLUMBINE. Struck with his brush
[*Pointing to Watteau's portrait of the Queen.*]
Out, in one minute, that high and haughty smile,
Out, all the insolent glory of her face —

LANCRET [*with rebuke*]. He is my master.

COLUMBINE [*leaning over Lancret's portrait*]. If the queen's eye fell,
Then, upon this, Lancret —

LANCRET. Vainglorious child,
Does splendor purchase you?

[*Watteau enters. Columbine goes to him.*]

COLUMBINE. Lancret — I pledge
My hand to — the Court Painter.

WATTEAU. Columbine,
Is that a riddle?

COLUMBINE. No — Monsieur Watteau.

WATTEAU. You love my office?

COLUMBINE. No — Monsieur Watteau.
[*Draws him to Lancret's portrait of the Queen.*]
Come! See this portrait. Let us criticise it
And tease the artist for the golden manner
He stole from you. The boy amuses me.
He strives so hard to be Watteau. Come! come!
Instruct my protégé.

WATTEAU. Why should I do so?
COLUMBINE. Because I ask you.
WATTEAU. That is cause enough.
Sound logic.
COLUMBINE. Oh, this little me! To think
I am so small and powerful. I feel
Big as a lion. Fear me, great Watteau.
WATTEAU. Well — so I do.
COLUMBINE. But why?
WATTEAU. White magic! Spell
Of little meaning that the wit denies
And yet the heart believes.
COLUMBINE. How well you praise me.
Put out your hand. How big! Now look at mine!
Master, which hand is stronger?
WATTEAU. Columbine's.
COLUMBINE. Speak more such words. What would you?
WATTEAU. Your heart.
COLUMBINE. Why — so —
'T is but a bauble.
WATTEAU. I would die for it.
COLUMBINE. Would you, Watteau? Then teach this silly boy
To learn his lesson.
WATTEAU [*curiously*]. Delilah? Oh, Delilah.
COLUMBINE. I am not.
WATTEAU. Ah?
COLUMBINE. Master, he is a truant
Not swift at learning. I would have him learn.
WATTEAU. But if the pupil should outstrip the master —
So gracious, fine, fashioned so shapely, fair
To please court ladies!
LANCRET. Master!
COLUMBINE. Oh, Watteau,
Teach him.

WATTEAU. But why?
COLUMBINE. I love his sweetheart.
WATTEAU. True.
That is the very sterling coin of speech.
How could you spend it!
COLUMBINE. She dances next to me
In the ballet. The one in scarlet slippers.
Her name is Anastase.
WATTEAU. But wherefore lie?
COLUMBINE. I promised her to help him.
WATTEAU. Wherefore lie?
Yet such explicit guile is almost truth
It tells so on itself.
COLUMBINE [*pleading*]. Show him, Watteau.
Look, it needs *you*.
LANCRET. Master!
COLUMBINE. Then I will love you.
WATTEAU. Sure?
COLUMBINE. Oh, I will! I'll take the heart of me
And put it in your hands.
WATTEAU. A sugar heart?
With white doves painted on it?
COLUMBINE. No, no, no!
A really, truly, really heart, Watteau.
WATTEAU [*to Lancret*]. Lend me your oil.
LANCRET. Master, how you trust me.
WATTEAU. No, no! my son — I love you well, but never
Think that I trust you.
COLUMBINE [*holding oil for Watteau*]. The oil.
WATTEAU [*beginning work on Lancret's portrait*]. Now learn of me. [*He scrutinizes the oil.*]
Bah! But you keep it clean.
LANCRET. But —
WATTEAU. My own oil
Is full of dust; I clean it once a week.

And bits of stick and hair and cobweb too
I keep in it. Let moth and dust corrupt
What 's in this world.

LANCRET. But pardon me, Watteau,
Your colors fade the sooner.

WATTEAU. That 's why I do it.
I advise that you do likewise.
[*He has altered the portrait.*]
Look!

COLUMBINE [*in triumph*]. He has done it.

WATTEAU. That 's all. But just a high light and a line.
A little, little line. 'T was just that much
That made the gulf on the Heaven side of Dives.
By Monsieur Lancret — portrait of the queen.
As good as mine, I think. [*Turning to his own.*]
Ah — how I loathe it!
[*He turns again to Lancret's portrait.*]
I advise you, Lancret, place it where the queen
May see it.

LANCRET. But —

WATTEAU. It may advantage you.
For if she favors it above Watteau's —

COLUMBINE. Above your own, Watteau?
[*They stand before Watteau's portrait.*]

WATTEAU. 'T is failure.

COLUMBINE. Yet
The world would say success.

WATTEAU. Sweet Columbine —
The heart heeds not the applauding multitude
But its own judgment.

COLUMBINE. Nay —

WATTEAU. It sickens me.

COLUMBINE [*scheming*]. 'T is not your best.

WATTEAU. What?

COLUMBINE. In a conquering mood

Think what you might achieve with such a face!
Would I might see that portrait!

WATTEAU. I hate my work.
[*Is about to blot it out with his brush.*]
I will destroy it. [*Lancret catches his arm.*]

LANCRET. No!

COLUMBINE [*passionately*]. Lancret!

LANCRET. My child,
Would you have had me?

COLUMBINE. Oh, fastidious workman!
'T is that fierce conscience I admire, master,
That tries and burns the creatures of your brain.
'T was just such valiant acts of regal spendthrift
That made me love you first.

WATTEAU. Child!

COLUMBINE. When I saw
Kings could not bribe you — who would never send
A painting scourged by your own soul's reproach,
To strut before an applauding public — then
I saw Watteau and loved him.

WATTEAU. Woman! Woman!
Weave on.

COLUMBINE. Watteau, you know how I desire
The world for you. Oh, win it royally
With no concessions. I am shy of him
That stoops to please — a court.

WATTEAU. I see. I see.
Oh, Columbine, you are a simple version
Of a mysterious tale whose magic thought
In words one syllabled is written large
In a child's primer.

COLUMBINE. 'T was a god I loved.

WATTEAU. Or rather, the Court Painter.

COLUMBINE. Court Painter? No!
I know him not. But Watteau, scornful, splendid,

In rags, half famished, with the eyes that look
Through, through — till I feel helpless as the air,
Transparent, simple —

WATTEAU. Simple as the air,
But yet — how subtle!

COLUMBINE. Now you have grown precious
Of work you value not. Like other men!
How I should love you if with one bold stroke —
But men are cowards. Yet I would have you brave!
Watteau — I promise. If you lose it all,
The Court, the favor, here is Columbine!
Yours, yours! All yours!

WATTEAU. I will not take your promise.
I have given you so much. Take back the word
By my free gift that otherwise your hand
Will filch from my soul's casket — when all 's done.
Helplessly intricate! And yet so plain —
As complex things all are when once they are learned.
You are not simple enough to evade my wit
Even though 't is slow. I give you back your word,
One truth — in spite of you — as one would give
To a child a priceless gift he values not —
In case you should go up to it — and bewail
How little you have of honor. Now all 's plain.
And I 'll lose all, and you shall pledge your faith
To the Court Painter. Lancret — here 's the brush.
[*Pointing to his own portrait.*]
Now blot it out.

LANCRET. I will not.

WATTEAU. Columbine?

COLUMBINE. No! No! I dare not.

WATTEAU. What — are you afraid?

COLUMBINE. Let only him destroy it who has made.

WATTEAU. Oh, Columbine! God made you for the truth!
You are so explicit. Wherefore weave and weave —

So obvious, so cunning! Ask me straight
For the thing you want of me. Let 's have the truth.
Give me but that. Just for a moment lay
Your soul whole in my hands in a plain speech.
Be just for once clear and articulate,
Out of God's mouth as when he spoke you first,
So I may hear your music. Say, "Watteau,
I love this boy here, and I would have
The world for him and me. The world, Watteau,
That means so much to us and is to you —
Well — treasure also. Pray you give it me."

COLUMBINE. You do mistake. I do not want the world.

WATTEAU. Why, then, you almost spoil my faith in God,
Who, being perfect, let his hand go astray
And spoiled you in the making. Was it so hard
To fashion you more smoothly? Wherefore break us
To such discredit? Maker of us all,
We do beseech Thee for a perfectness.
Oh, Architect of sighs, doubt, and disgust,
Builder of broken bodies and of souls
That bear the blemish of Thy hand, — no, no,
I will not think upon the bruisèd world,
That like the serpent shines beneath Thy heel,
Accursed and beautiful, afflicted, fair,
Bright and vindictive. Rather will I set
My hand to make perfection — if I may.
Be perfect as you are fair. Say, "Give it me."
Come, speak the words! You will not, even so?
How I desire this honor for you, child.
Is it so hard? What, even as a gift
Bought with no purchase money of your own
But my own blood?

COLUMBINE. I pray you, give it me.

[Watteau dashes out the face of the portrait with his brush.]

WATTEAU. Vanitas vanitatum! Let it pass.

[*A Page enters.*]

PAGE. The queen.

[*Queen enters with her Lady-in-waiting.*]

QUEEN. Monsieur Watteau, I come at last
To see my portrait.

[*She pauses before Lancret's painting.*]

It is changed.

WATTEAU. Yes, madam.

QUEEN. How different! Yet — I congratulate you.
That touch! How full of you!

THE LADY. Your majesty,
The likeness is most perfect.

QUEEN. Watteau? yourself?
Does it give you pleasure, sir?

WATTEAU. It is well done.

QUEEN. That bold technique! A real Watteau!

WATTEAU. No, madam.

QUEEN. What do you mean?

WATTEAU. 'T was not my hand that did it.
Lancret, a friend. [*Points to his own painting.*]
There, madam, is my portrait.
A real Watteau.

QUEEN. What, sir, would you insult me?
Blot out my likeness!

LANCRET. Madam, pardon me.
He compliments you. To his fastidious taste
It was not worthy of you.

COLUMBINE. Lancret!

LANCRET. Dear madam,
Genius is whimsical. In its own ways
It praises or dispraises. 'T was a dream —
Perfection — took the breath with loveliness.

Unheard of beauty! To his fastidious taste
It was not worthy of you.

QUEEN. Watteau, Watteau!
That was a savage compliment. But still —
Luxembourg waits for you. The Sistine Chapel
Is restless for angels and the great Madonna
I bid you paint there.

WATTEAU [*holding out the slippers*]. Madam, upon these
I have drawn that great Madonna.

QUEEN [*taking the shoes*]. Satin slippers!
What butterflies!

THE LADY. What wreaths!

QUEEN. What pretty Cupids.

WATTEAU. I painted a Madonna on the sole.

[*Queen turns them over.*]

QUEEN. A Madonna! 'T is a wonder.

WATTEAU. Madam — I spent
The dreams of many days and wakeful nights
Upon that little shoe.

QUEEN. But this is spendthrift!
One promenade upon a velvet carpet
Would spoil the glory of it.

WATTEAU. Therefore, madam,
I wrought them as they are.

QUEEN. They are just my size.

WATTEAU. The smallest shoe in the kingdom.

QUEEN. I'll try them on.

WATTEAU. Pardon me, madam.

QUEEN. So —

THE LADY. Monsieur is honored.
May I suggest thrice blessed is that man
That makes the queen a welcome gift?

QUEEN. And why?

WATTEAU. They are not meant for — this.

QUEEN. I see! I see!

[*Reaching him her purse.*]

Well, Monsieur Watteau — was it meant for this?
WATTEAU. No, madam.
QUEEN. Nay — but, man, 't is the queen's purse,
With a thousand francs.
WATTEAU. About this little shoe
Is the sweet savor of my midnight dreams.
QUEEN. I triple it.
WATTEAU [*holding shoe*]. Oh, perfect only thing
That making I have loved, fragile and fair,
I'll keep you — so.
QUEEN. But I will have it! Sir —
Five thousand francs.
WATTEAU [*fondling shoes*]. Sweet dream.
QUEEN. Then twenty thousand!
WATTEAU. I hear the Cupids play their little harps.
QUEEN. Is this another compliment, Watteau?
It savors of insult, like the other. Nay —
A fortune! Name your price!
WATTEAU. Never — though I
Am hounded with debts clean to the very door
Of the debtor's prison.
QUEEN. Oh, I hate this man!
Give me the shoe. I say — the shoe I'll have.
A title — would you? Why — do you not know
What 't is to raise the enmity of queens?
Down, down, you dog! And lick my hand! A duke,
This will I make you.
WATTEAU [*with a smile*]. Ah?
QUEEN. Does he not hear?
Sir — I command you. What, would you be hanged?
I 'll move the powers of Heaven and Earth and Hell
To get these slippers. What I want, I'll have.
You will not take rewards? Then I will strike.
I banish you from court. Our doors in vain
Shall plead for the wings of angels. Not a dream

Of Watteau's shall come true about the walls
Of the Sistine Chapel. Go and face despair,
Hunger and cold, imprisonment, disaster,
Even as of old before I favored you,
Dependent! Slave! That shall be scourged indeed
By my own hand! Do you deny your queen?
Sell me the shoes — or I will ruin you!

WATTEAU. You cannot pay their price!

QUEEN. I cannot? What?
Have I not coffers of gold, rich diadems,
Worth a king's ransom, fit to buy my whims?
Is France so poor?

WATTEAU. Ah, Lady, give me then
That gold whereof the streets of Heaven are made,
On which the steps of angels fall as sweet
As silver rain over a shining air,
You cannot buy from me these shoes, Oh, Queen!
France is so poor.

QUEEN. Ah, now, I see! I see!
Artist — and poet! Such folk must be paid
In magic coin. You are intricate
With your strange courtesies of finer worlds.
Forgive me, sir, that am but a Queen on Earth —
That small and vulgar province in Great Space.
I am not skilled to the urbanities
Of starry cities — the great gracious ways
Of the far capitals of noble thought.
Pardon the rustic and her bourgeoisie!
She will learn manners. I am rich, Monsieur —
And I will pay, but in more subtle-wise
Than gold or titles. I will give a treasure
Great Kings sigh for in vain. I pray you, sir,
Sell me the shoes — and I will pay — a kiss.

WATTEAU. That, gracious lady, is too much to pay.
I cannot tell my Lord, on the Day of Judgment,
That I have stolen their treasure from Great Kings.

QUEEN. Why, man — I am the queen!
WATTEAU. And I — Watteau.
QUEEN. So. Then I will be mild. I have behaved
Like a child that cried for a star. Is it so high?
But you can give it, like the god you are.
I will not barter. I will beg. Monsieur —
Give me the shoes.
COLUMBINE. Watteau — give me the shoes.
WATTEAU. Oh, Columbine, so spun of sorceries
You could not trust me, even at the end,
But needs must win by guile what I would give!
Ah, child — how fair you are! Take them.
[*Giving her the shoes.*]
Thereon
Has breathed my soul. It is my masterpiece.
COLUMBINE. I'll try them on. [*Putting one on.*]
Oh, see my darling foot!
LANCRET. Watteau — oh, master!
WATTEAU. She is of little worth.
And yet — Lancret — we needs must love her. So?
COLUMBINE [*with both shoes on*]. Ha — ah! I'm Columbine! But these are shoes
In which to run. My feet feel happy in them.
WATTEAU. They are full of thoughts of you.
COLUMBINE. I feel like flying.
WATTEAU. The wings of the butterflies wrought in the satin
Will bear you up.
COLUMBINE. Oh, how I want to dance!
WATTEAU. You feel the tunes the little cherubs play
Upon their harps. Hush — somebody is crying!
It is the tears of Watteau's lost Madonna.
COURTIN. He 's mad!
COLUMBINE [*dancing and singing*].
Blossoms floating in the wine!
Every one loves Columbine!

WATTEAU. Dance! Dance!

QUEEN. Lancret, come to the court to-morrow.
I make you Painter to the Queen.

COLUMBINE [*victoriously*]. Lancret!

QUEEN. Monsieur Watteau, I bid you an adieu.
[*She and her Lady sweep to the door.*]
I go from your door. But when I go, monsieur,
Hunger and Desolation and Despair
Shall enter in. I pray you, see this man,
Who better loves a foolish Columbine
Than a Madonna! When the centuries
Shall loose their tongues on him, their speech shall be
Monsieur Watteau, great Painter and great Fool.
[*She goes out with her Lady.*]

COLUMBINE [*in Lancret's arms*]. But oh, Lancret, Lancret!

WATTEAU. Dance, Columbine.
Upon those little satin shoes are painted
What made night perfect and on a barren day
Shed light. Dance, dance, as Judith danced of old
With the head of Holofernes.
[*Columbine dances and sings.*]

COLUMBINE.
Blossoms perish in the snow.
Columbine won't kiss Pierrot!
[*Her dance increases in wildness. Her skirts glitter around her.*]

WATTEAU. Oh, whither? Immortality and Fame,
Fortune and High Endeavor sketched thereon!

COLUMBINE [*singing*].
Blossoms fade and we forget,
She was fairer than Pierrette!

WATTEAU. Whither? ye flowering wreaths and little Cupids,
That play through satin all your subtle tunes?

Oh, whither? roses! whither? butterflies!
Dance — dance! [*Columbine sings and dances.*]

COLUMBINE.

Blossoms lead the April in,
Columbine flounced Harlequin.

WATTEAU. Whither? oh, heart of Watteau, wrought among
The blossoming wreaths and all ye precious dreams
That made it golden! Rushing of vague wings,
Haloes and tears of Mary — all of these
That shone in it so long. Dance!

COLUMBINE [*faltering*]. I am tired!
And — oh, Watteau!

WATTEAU. Dance! dance! I bid you dance!
[*She dances again, more passionately than ever.*]
Forever and forever! O Virgin Mary! —
Dance! dance! Convey my visions to the dust.
Efface my dreams in darkness. Oh, the mad whirl
In which they all go out! Dance them away —
Even to destruction and to utter death!

CURTAIN

COLOMBINE [1]

A Fantasy

By REGINALD ARKELL

CHARACTERS

DAN'L, *an old man.*
NATHAN'L, *a boy.*
COLOMBINE.
HARLEQUIN.
PIERROT.
AN OLD MAN.

SCENE: *A Roman Camp on the summit of Cissbury Beacon in the South Downs, England. A fairy ring occupies the foreground. All round are beech trees. The time is evening.*

An old man and a boy are seen talking; both are labourers. The old man, who is seated, speaks:

DAN'L. Well, Nathan'l.
NATHAN'L. Well, Dan'l.
DAN'L. There's little use in stopping here much longer.
NATHAN'L. Not as I can see.
DAN'L. Like my old eyes, the sun don't grow no stronger.
NATHAN'L. And I wants my tea.
DAN'L. Do ee, lad?
NATHAN'L, Ah, main bad.
DAN'L. Which means 't is time to go, I reckons.

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NATHAN'L. That 's a proposition as I seconds.
DAN'L. Come on then, let 's be moving. Tip us yer daddle.
NATHAN'L. All of a sudden you be in a mortal caddle.
I wants to hear the finish of that yarn
As you was spinning down at Tranter's Barn.
A peck of troubles it was all about.
I wants to know how everything turned out.
DAN'L. You wants your tea, that 's what you wants, my son.
NATHAN'L. There 's time enough for tea when you be done.

DAN'L. Well, though 't is little enough I read,
I sid in a story-book years ago
(Though mind, Nathan'l, there beant no need
To be letting on as I told ee so)
That all the troubles as worrits a man
Was locked in a box when the world began.

And there no doubt they 'd ha' bid till now,
If the dummel soul as had got the key,
Had n't got mixed up with a maid somehow
And gone and handed it over to she.
And what do ee fancy the maiden did?
Darn me, Nathan'l, ur lifted the lid.

And all they troubles come trooping out,
Like hens from a chicken-run might have done.
For the maiden fancied without a doubt,
They 'd go back in the evening like, one by one.
But time 's got to settle a few more clocks,
Afore they troubles goes back to their box.

Straight, Nathan'l, 't is near enough
To make a Methody parson swear.
And every time as I reads such stuff,

I goes so red as yon moon up there.
To think of the trouble ur brought on we —
I reckon I owes my old gal to she.

NATHAN'L. Is it true, do ee think, Dan'l?
DAN'L. Mebbe, mebbe not, Nathan'l.
NATHAN'L. Do ee think, Dan'l — she let out the lot?
DAN'L. Mebbe, Nathan'l, mebbe not.
NATHAN'L. Sounds like a fairy story to me.
DAN'L. Mebbe, Nathan'l, mebbe, mebbe.
NATHAN'L. Do ee believe in fairies, Dan'l?
DAN'L. Can't be sure as I do, Nathan'l.
NATHAN'L. Well, I don't anyway, and that's fact.

[*Enter Colombine.*]

DAN'L. Lawks-a-mussey, Nathan'l, be I dreaming or be I cracked?
NATHAN'L. My goodness, Dan'l, I do believe as she's a fairy . . .
DAN'L. Here, come into the shadow of these trees,
And give that clacking tongue of yourn a rest.
NATHAN'L. Oh, this be more wonderful than all the things I ever guessed.
DAN'L. And it means *summat* that you *may* depend.
NATHAN'L. See, where she walks, the grass don't even bend
Beneath her feet. She be a fairy, Dan'l.
DAN'L. I wish you'd hold your clacking tongue, Nathan'l.
[*Columbine, hearing a noise, pauses to listen.*]
COLOMBINE. Who's there? The daylight fades. I cannot see.
DAN'L. You go.
NATHAN'L. No, you.
DAN'L. So please you, Miss, 't is we.
COLOMBINE. Good evening, Sirs.

DAN'L. Our best respects to ee.
A goodish evening, to be sure, but getting dark and cold.
Time gals like you was safe abed, if I might make so bold.

COLOMBINE. Old man, the night has but begun.

DAN'L. The day be done.

COLOMBINE. The moon has scarcely risen yet.

DAN'L. The sun has set.

COLOMBINE. The sun his wandering footsteps stays to greet
the crescent moon.
The nightjar and the nightingale will both be singing
soon,

DAN'L. Us don't set much store by nightingales in these parts, and as for nightjars! Oh lor, us shoots they.

Give I a linnet now,
A-sitting on a bough;
As sings his message to the sun,
And goes to sleep when day be done,
Respectable like!

NATHAN'L [*coming forward*].

Queer things,
These here rings
You sees in the grass
When you pass.
They say 't is where Pharisees dances at night!
Be that right?

COLOMBINE. Quite right; yet once the circle that you see,
Saw war and tumult.

DAN'L. Lawks-a-mussey me!

COLOMBINE. The Roman legions camped on yonder brow,
And built the road you stand on.

NATHAN'L. Did they now!

COLOMBINE. The sun would sink out yonder in the west,
And shine upon their helmets.

DAN'L. Well I'm blest!

COLOMBINE. The very spot where Julius Cæsar sat,
Lies just behind those beeches.

NATHAN'L. Think of that!
COLOMBINE. In yonder barrow treasures rare lie hid.
Dig deep to find them.
DAN'L. Well I never did!
NATHAN'L. But when did all this
Happen, Miss?
How many years ago,
I'd like to know?
COLOMBINE. Roughly two thousand, on this very spot.
DAN'L. Lor! What a memory you must have got.
COLOMBINE [*to Nathan'l*]. But tell me please;
Beneath these trees,
What travellers come, and whither bound?
Do still these ancient heights resound
With martial music and the tramp of men?
NATHAN'L. Us gets a hurdy-gurdy now and then,
And once a clown on stilts went through the wood;
And oh! he could catch pennies, that he could.
COLOMBINE. But in what fashion do you pass your days?
NATHAN'L. I kill the time in various sorts of ways
Scaring the rooks as settles on the corn;
Helping the shepherd when the lambs be born.
Talking to Dan'l about these here rings,
And wondering about a power of things
As don't concern nobody, I suppose.
But then, you must do summat, goodness knows.
COLOMBINE. Of course. 'T is lonely here without a doubt.
What are the things you're wondering about
To-day?
NATHAN'L. Such things as surely never was.
Such things as surely no one ever does.
And yet, of nothing, for they moves so fast,
You finds as you've forgotten them at last.
Just like a dream they passes and be gone.
Just like a dream they passes . . .

COLOMBINE. Yes, go on.

NATHAN'L. Just like a dream, for though I thinks a lot,
Before they're rightly thought they're clean forgot.
Though somehow, now I sits and talks to you,
I keeps remembering things I never knew.
Just like as though somebody slammed a door,
When you was going where you'd been before;
Leaving you standing on the further side,
Wondering at what was happening inside.
Whether the folk you knew was there or not;
Whether you really knew, and had forgot;
Whether you'd been there once when you was small
Or whether you was never there at all.
'T is plaguey awkerd, wondering, that it be.
And now I must be off, I wants my tea. [*Exit.*]

COLOMBINE. Good-bye. And think sometimes of me.

[*Rousing herself from the brown study into which this revelation has thrown her, and addressing Dan'l.*]

Are you fond of a fight?

DAN'L [*startled*]. Eh?

COLOMBINE. Are you fond of a fight?

DAN'L. It all depends. Why?

COLOMBINE. There's going to be a fight.

DAN'L. When? Where?

COLOMBINE. Very soon.
By the light of the moon.
On the very stroke of nine.
All for love of Colombine.

DAN'L. Shall I fetch a policeman?

COLOMBINE. A policeman! Dear me, no.

DAN'L. Who's going to fight?

COLOMBINE. Don't you know?
Harlequin and Pierrot.

DAN'L. Never heard of they.

COLOMBINE. Won't it be fun?

DAN'L. Good fun
For the one as gets killed.

COLOMBINE. But they won't kill each other.
They never do. They're *most* dependable.

DAN'L. Have um fought before?

COLOMBINE. Of course. Hundreds of times.

DAN'L. Silly young chaps.

COLOMBINE. They're not silly. They're fighting for me. Don't you understand?

DAN'L. I fought about a girl once. But only once. It was a long time ago.

COLOMBINE. You're not romantic. Romance would die if it was n't for fighting. Romance *is* fighting.

DAN'L. Then I've had quite enough romance to please me.

COLOMBINE. All properly constituted love affairs should include a fight. Love without fighting is insipid.

DAN'L. *You* don't have to do the fighting. Which of 'em loves you the most?

COLOMBINE. Why, Pierrot, of course.

DAN'L. Then why don't you marry him?

COLOMBINE. And disappoint Harlequin? I could n't do that.

DAN'L. When are you going to decide?

COLOMBINE. I don't know. [*On her fingers.*] This year, next year, some time, never. To-night perhaps.

DAN'L. One day they'll get tired of fighting. What then?

COLOMBINE. Never!

DAN'L. You're sure of that?

COLOMBINE. Oh, yes. Quite sure.

DAN'L. One of them may get killed.

COLOMBINE. They would n't be so careless.

DAN'L. What should you do if one of 'em got killed by accident?

COLOMBINE. I should be very angry. But you're very horrid to suggest such things. Why don't you go away?

DAN'L. Good-bye.

COLOMBINE. No, stay.

DAN'L. Well, I'm fond of a fight, I must say.

COLOMBINE. Hush! They are coming. Quick, behind this tree.

DAN'L. Anywhere in the background 's good enough for me.

COLOMBINE. A fight, a fight! And all for love of me.

[*The orchestra plays quietly the Soldiers' Chorus and snatches of other martial refrains. The two watchers betray tense excitement. Harlequin and Pierrot enter arm in arm. Any differences they may have had are evidently settled. Colombine looks on in astonishment.*]

HARLEQUIN. Mind you, as girls go, Colombine 's one of the best.

PIERROT. Ah yes.

HARLEQUIN. But nothing to fight about.

PIERROT [*without conviction*]. No.

HARLEQUIN. And fighting 's going out of fashion. There 's no doubt about that.

PIERROT. Yes.

HARLEQUIN. The whole trend of modern thought is opposed to it.

PIERROT. Yes.

HARLEQUIN. None of the best people do it.

PIERROT. I suppose not.

HARLEQUIN. And one must be in the movement.

PIERROT. Of course.

HARLEQUIN. Arbitration 's the thing nowadays.

PIERROT. What 's that?

HARLEQUIN. Why, you each talk until you're out of breath, and the one with most breath wins.

PIERROT [*taking a deep breath*]. That seems a good idea.

HARLEQUIN. It is.

PIERROT. But what will Colombine say if we don't fight? She loves to watch us fight.

HARLEQUIN. My dear chap, we must be firm. Adopt your point of view, and stick to it in the face of all opposition.

COLOMBINE [*advancing*]. Are n't you going to fight?

PIERROT [*kindly*]. Not to-night.

COLOMBINE. Oh! Why not?

HARLEQUIN. Well, we've got
Other fish to fry,
That's why.

COLOMBINE. Oh! do fight!

PIERROT. Not to-night.

HARLEQUIN. Now, my dear girl, do listen to reason. You will admit, I suppose, that the most elementary point about a duel is to spit your opponent through the gizzard.

COLOMBINE. Yes.

HARLEQUIN. Well, I have n't got a gizzard, and what's the use of trying to spit a man's gizzard, if he has n't got a gizzard to spit? You must be reasonable.

COLOMBINE. How do you know you have n't got a gizzard?

HARLEQUIN. We don't know for certain, we assume.

PIERROT. You've only to look at him to see there is n't room.

COLOMBINE. But why the gizzard? What does it matter *where* you spit him so long as you do spit him?

HARLEQUIN. For Heaven's sake, my dear girl, don't preach such revolutionary doctrines. There is a certain etiquette to be observed, even in a battle.

COLOMBINE [*after a pause*]. But it's quite simple. You spit Pierrot. He's got a gizzard, I suppose.

HARLEQUIN. Now, listen. Pierrot consulted a phrenologist . . . .

PIERROT. Soothsayer!

HARLEQUIN. Sorry — soothsayer, who said he was born to be hung. . . .

PIERROT. Hanged!

HARLEQUIN. Hanged, and so, of course, he does n't want to run the risk of disappointing him.

COLOMBINE. Very considerate, I'm sure.
I think you're absolutely *horrid*, there. [*Cries.*]

HARLEQUIN [*to Pierrot*]. Don't waver, both together.

HARLEQUIN and PIERROT. We don't care
Tuppence what you think or say,
We talked the matter over, here to-day,
And arbitration is the only way.

COLOMBINE. You're frightened.

HARLEQUIN. Don't be silly. Frightened! Me!

COLOMBINE. Well, who's your abritrator going to be?

HARLEQUIN [*taken aback*]. Why, yes, we must have some one, I suppose.
But who's to do it?

PIERROT. Goodness only knows!
There's not a single person within call.

COLOMBINE [*clapping her hands*]. Hurrah! You'll have to fight, then, after all.

[*There is a pause, during which Pierrot and Harlequin look at each other in dismay. Colombine on the other hand claps her hands and pirouettes round the stage. Then Harlequin sees Dan'l and drags him forward at the same time speaking in asides.*]

HARLEQUIN. What's your name?

DAN'L. Much the same
As it's always bin,
Week out, week in,
This seventy year and more.

HARLEQUIN. Good! We want you to arbitrate. You're the very man.

DAN'L. Lawks-a-mussey. I'll do it if I can.

HARLEQUIN. There's much gold
Wealth untold!
If you only do
As I tell you to.

DAN'L. Fire away!

HARLEQUIN. Until to-day, Pierrot and I have been in the habit of engaging in mortal combat for the hand of Colombine. Owing to the fact that up to the present neither has had the decency to get killed, and as a result of the wave of anti-militarism that has swept over the country, we have decided to fall back on arbitration. And you are the arbitrator. You understand?

DAN'L. No!

HARLEQUIN. Then you're very thick.

DAN'L. You speaks too quick.
And the way you keeps hopping about makes me fair mazed.

HARLEQUIN. Now, listen. One of us is to marry Colombine, and you've to decide which it's to be. Do you see?

DAN'L. No.

HARLEQUIN. But it's quite simple.

DAN'L. Maybe. But how do I know which it's to be?

HARLEQUIN. I'll let you into a secret. It's me!

DAN'L. Oh! And if I goes and sez 't is you,
What's yon chap in the white trousers going to do?

HARLEQUIN. Never mind him. He's a fool.

DAN'L. It seems it don't much matter what I say;
I'm bound to upset one of ye either way.
Oh! very well.

HARLEQUIN. Colombine! Pierrot! Gather round.

[*They sit in a semicircle; Colombine and Dan'l in the centre.*]

DAN'L. I shall catch my death of cold, sitting on this damp ground.

[*There is silence, each waiting for the other to speak.*]

COLOMBINE. You don't seem very anxious, either of you.

DAN'L. Who goes first?

HARLEQUIN. If I don't say something, and quickly, I shall burst.

DAN'L. Then you'd best get started. [*Aside.*] How long will it take?

HARLEQUIN. Until it's ended.

DAN'L. Cut it short for goodness' sake.

HARLEQUIN. Colombine! Let me take you away from these lonely hills. Into the heart of the world where lies the Land of Yesterday. There are stored all the happy hours that you have known. You shall live them all over again, Colombine — every one. I will lead you by secret paths, through the dim woods of yesternight, until we stand together in the sunlight of the days that have been. Walking backward through the years, we will collect those dear lost delights, of which only the memory remains. From all that has gone before, it shall be yours to pick and choose, and no To-morrow shall throw its ominous shade before. The past shall deliver up its treasures to your hand; regrets shall be ended, and happiness shall be sure. Will you come, Colombine?

COLOMBINE. No, Harlequin. The road to your Land of Yesterday is longer than you know, and there is no going back. Let us still take from the past our memories and our dreams, but do not ask for more, lest even these be denied.

HARLEQUIN. As you will. Then it is to the future that we must turn. Colombine, far from here, set in a desert of hot sand, is a crystal, so large, that all the giants of Africa could not stir it the thickness of a hair. Peering into its depths, you may read your future to the end of

time. A day, a week, a year, shall be no barrier to the vision of the mind. You may read all the riddles of the universe, and there will remain nothing that you do not know. You shall see your face as it will be when twice twenty harvest moons have waned, and fifty summer suns have set. And I alone can point you the way. Will you come, Colombine?

COLOMBINE. You promise much, Harlequin. It may well be that in some spot remote from the haunts of men, the Mirror of Fate yet lies hid. And you may find it. Who knows? But this, at least, is certain; the path will be difficult and the journey long. Would you not tire by the way, Harlequin? I think you would. [*Pause.*] And, it is not in distant deserts I would seek. In the woods of home, hearts may thrill to the eloquent silences of the night. [*Harlequin rises.*] All the secrets of the world might be ours, did we but care to learn the simple language of the nightingale. Across the moonlight, the shadows of the branches trace unforgettable things. Great secrets tremble on the lips of the leaves, and mortals grope vainly in the daylight for things seen most plainly in the dark.

DAN'L [*coughing to draw attention to himself*].

I've allus noticed, in whatever parts I med ha' bin,
A maid in love have allus got a fairish yarn to spin.
And in whatever parts I've bin, I've allus noticed, too,
The foolish lads do take it all for gospel, that um do.
But though I've kept good notice in whatever parts I was,
I've never heard a maid to spin a yarn like this un does.
Ur be a marvel, that ur be; I hope as ur won't try,
When ur 's tired of you two fellows here, to spin no yarns to I;
For fools be mostly biggest fools when um be old and grey.

And if I went along o' she, what *ud* my missus say?
Next man!

COLOMBINE. Come, Pierrot!

PIERROT [*with an effort*]. Colombine!

COLOMBINE. Yes, Pierrot.

HARLEQUIN. Go on!

DAN'L. Let 's hear what you've got to say, young fellow.

PIERROT. There is nothing to say.

COLOMBINE. Nothing to say!

PIERROT. Save that I love you, Colombine.

COLOMBINE. And is that so small a thing, Pierrot?

PIERROT. But I have nothing to offer you, nothing.

COLOMBINE [*softly*]. Save yourself.

HARLEQUIN. I have always said that Pierrot was master of sounding silences. The sweetest singer of unsung songs, his eloquent nothings go shrieking through the void. He scorns to desecrate the virgin purity of his foolscap with the written word. What love is that which dare not tell its love? Come, Colombine.

COLOMBINE. See, Harlequin, here is a beech nut.
You shake it, yet there is no sound. Is it full?
Is it empty?

HARLEQUIN. Who can say?

DAN'L. Likewise, young Nathan'l he picks up a match-box last week, and throws it away because there was no sound when he rattles en. [*To Harlequin.*] And what do you think?

HARLEQUIN. I could n't say.

DAN'L. It was so full all the time as not to rattle at all.

HARLEQUIN [*scornfully*]. Matches! ye gods!
Let 's talk of cucumbers.
Or shame the glory of this summer night
With tales of warming-pans.
Has no one here a button-hook,
With which to probe the vast unsounded deeps

[*To Dan'l.*] Of thy poor addled brain.
It yet may be,
In some uncharted corner of the void
That passes for thy mind,
We find a collar-stud.
Farewell! [*Exit.*]

DAN'L. Well, he won't come back again, that I will be bound,
And as I be catching my death of cold, sitting on this damp ground,
I'd best be moving. [*Rises.*] Ugh! Good-night to ee.

PIERROT. Good-night!

COLOMBINE [*aside to Dan'l*]. And, Mr. Arbitrator, if you see
Your friend Nathan'l, say that Pierrot
Owes more to him than he will ever know. [*Exit Dan'l.*]

COLOMBINE. They have gone!

PIERROT. Ah!

COLOMBINE. And the night draws on.

PIERROT. Yes.

COLOMBINE. You are sad. Why are you sad, Pierrot?

PIERROT. I cannot tell.

COLOMBINE. And you are cold. Is it the night air?

PIERROT. The wind-swept wold
Is a street of gold,
So my lady be walking there.

COLOMBINE. Yet you are sad. See, they have gone and will come not again.

PIERROT. So love may vanish too,
And of his chain no link remain
To tell the way he flew.

COLOMBINE. Love, as the skylark, soars into that Heaven where't fain would be.

PIERROT. And singing still, returns. Time was when you, with Harlequin, would revel till the cold grey dawn came in.

COLOMBINE. Light loves sometime were pleasant, but to-night the face of love seems changed. No more will stray this wandering heart of mine.

PIERROT. Are you not sorry, Colombine?

COLOMBINE. Sorry for what, Pierrot?

PIERROT. For loss of Harlequin.

COLOMBINE. Harlequin is very clever but he talks of what he does not know, and promises what is not his to give. Cleverness is not everything, Pierrot. The mind is like a garden full of flowers, but

The heart is a little house,
With windows facing southerly;
By which a pathway winds.
And there, behind the blinds,
We sit and wait,
Watching, waiting for what?
We know not.

The garden is a pleasant place in summer, but when it is winter, we seek the fireside of the little house.

PIERROT. Yet you are fond of gardens and pretty flowers, Colombine?

COLOMBINE. What flowers grow
In your garden, Pierrot?

PIERROT. My garden is full of the flowers,
My mother planted for me;
Curious, old-world flowers,
Thyme, lavender, rosemary,
Planted in days gone by.
And, though no gardener I,
As the shadows fall, I tend them all;
Watering, pruning there.
Am I happy in my lot?
I know not.

COLOMBINE. And there is the little house, Pierrot.

PIERROT. Ah, yes, there is the little house.

Do you remember when
You peeped through the pane, and then
Went on your way again?
Out of my sight, although
I beckoned you as you passed,
And sat at my window mournfully.
But you came again at last.
And, seeing you come, I said:
"The flowers in my garden are dead,
So will she have no more of me."

COLOMBINE. I am knocking at the door, Pierrot.
Knocking and waiting there,
For the sound of a step on the stair.
Will you open to me, Pierrot?

[*Pierrot's answer may be taken in the affirmative. As they sit together, it grows dark.*]

PIERROT [*rising*]. Come dear, and let us go,
Together, hand in hand,
Into that sun-lit land,
Where life and love are things inseparable.
Where, beneath cloudless skies
The happy are the wise,
And none reprove the glory of a love they may not understand. [*Exeunt together.*]

[*It becomes quite dark: Dan'l and an Old Man pass slowly across the stage, carrying lanterns, and peering cautiously into the blackness of the night.*]

THE OLD MAN. You was dreaming, Dan'l. That's about the size of it.

DAN'L. And I tells ee I wur as wide awake as you be. Us had been sitting over-long by the clump, and all of a sudden I looks up and sees a fairy. "Lawks-a-mussey, Nathan'l," I sez, "be I dreaming or be I cracked?"

[*They pass off, and the curtain falls.*]

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

I. The Technique of Vocal Expression

Basic Principles. The theory of vocal expression in speech is based upon a few simple principles. These are derived from a study of human emotions and of their manifestation. In the course of such investigation, it is found that all emotions may be classified as either exciting or depressing. These emotions, of course, vary so much in degree that, while, on the one hand, when they are strong, there is no question as to which class they belong; on the other hand, when they are weak, they may seem so mildly exciting or so mildly depressing that one may be puzzled to call them by either name. But, generally speaking, by an exciting emotion we mean one which tends to mental activity; and by a depressing emotion, one which tends to mental sluggishness or mental inactivity. The nerves, responding to these mental states, affect the whole physical system: to a great degree when the emotion is strong; to a lesser degree when the emotion is weaker. Thus, exciting emotions, producing mental activity, through the nerves stimulate physical energy, and the muscular system tends to become tighter; and depressing emotions, producing mental sluggishness or inertia, through the nerves make a drain upon physical energy, and the muscular system tends to become flabby. Since the vocal bands constitute a most sensitive factor of this muscular system, they respond more sympathetically to both types of emotion and to every degree of the same than did ever an æolian harp to the summer breeze.

Utterance. Utterance as a technical term in the study of speech refers ordinarily to the method of sending out the voice. But so expressive of certain states of mind and body is the inhalation of the breath, that we shall have

occasion in discussing utterance to speak, not only of the way the breath and words go forth, but also of the way the breath is taken in.

There are eight principal modes of utterance: *Effusive, Expulsive, Explosive, Sighing, Sobbing, Panting, Gasping, Laughing.*

Effusive utterance is the mere flowing out of the voice. This mode is the expression of mental tranquillity, of a state of mind which comes as near being neither elated nor depressed as is compatible with any degree of consciousness. Naturally, therefore, this mode lacks energy and can never be used in public speaking. Hence, whenever it is necessary to represent such a mental condition in public, one uses a sort of counterfeit, consisting of the expulsive utterance, which is defined in the next paragraph, with a slow rate of time, and only such a degree of energy, applied very evenly, as may be sufficient to make the voice carry. An example of a passage which might appropriately be read with effusive utterance in a small room and with its counterfeit in public occurs in Percinet's part on page 107 of *The Romancers:*

The day declines. . . . Deepening twilight blots out the flowers. . . . The breeze sounds like a silken robe. One sees the flowers no longer, but their fragrance pierces my soul and fills my eyes with tears.

Expulsive utterance is the driving out of the voice. This mode is the expression of an active, but not impulsively active, state of mind. Naturally examples of passages to be read with this mode abound in all literature and constantly occur in all the plays in this volume. But for a concrete instance, take the first speech of any length in *The Shoes that Danced* (page 226). Courtin, looking at Watteau's portrait of the Queen, with the world in her hands, says:

What she will have,
That will she have, — most arrogant of queens,
That never knew denial. God himself
Refuses her not anything at all
Save lovely meekness. So in very truth
The Lady has for hers the great round world
To give or take.

Explosive utterance is the bursting forth of the voice. This mode is the expression of abruptness of mental action, of impulse. Such form of mental activity, being common in everyday life, is likewise of frequent occurrence in the drama. It is heard, for example, in the undertones and suppressed voices of the three characters in *Nevertheless*, as the burglar comes upon the children (page 190):

BURGLAR. Don't holler.
BOY. A burglar!
GIRL. If you don't move, Billie, a burglar won't hurt you.
BOY. Hold up your hands, Lou.
BOY and GIRL. We give up.
BURGLAR. Put out the light.
GIRL. Please don't put out the light . . . We'll be good.
[*A door is heard to close in the next room.*]
BURGLAR. Put out the light. Who was that?

Of course, mental states shade into one another. The mind becomes more excited and abrupt in its action, or it becomes less excited and less abrupt. Hence the modes of utterance likewise shade into one another. Thus, while there are numerous passages in the drama which are to be read with an utterance unquestionably explosive, there are also many others which are to be read with an utterance so mildly explosive that one can hardly tell whether to call the mode explosive or expulsive. Such a passage occurs in the part of Straforel in *The Romancers*, when he arranges his party for the abduction (page 106):

One star gleams already in the sky. The day's in flight. [*He arranges his men.*] You there! — you there! — you there! Yes, the hour of prayers must be near. When the bell tolls, she comes, all in her white. Then I will whistle. [*He looks at the sky.*] The moon? 'T is perfect! We shall not miss a single effect.

Sighing utterance is the result of a sudden relaxation of the muscles used in breathing. At the moment of this relaxation, the air begins coming forth in a steady stream, resulting in either an effusive or in an expulsive utterance according to the degree of energy with which the muscular system has given way. If there is no speech, the sound is of a prolonged *huh!* But if speech occurs, the

words ride out on the expiring breath. This mode of utterance is the language of mental distress, of sadness, and of regret. An example is found in *The Shoes that Danced*, in the lines of Watteau (page 239) as he sees through Columbine's trickery:

> I see. I see.
> Oh, Columbine, you are a simple version
> Of a mysterious tale whose magic thought
> In words one syllabled is written large
> In a child's primer.

It should be observed that if, after the initial release of the breath, the speech continues to express the same state of mind, long pauses, during which the breath is inhaled slowly, occur after each unit of utterance, whether it be a single sound, a word, a phrase, or a sentence. The breath is then held for a fraction of a second, and then the next utterance, like the first, rides out on the expiration. For example, in the above passage, the first four words might be given with the first expiration; then the breath is taken, held for a moment, and on its expiration is uttered "Oh, Columbine." The next pauses occur before "whose" and "is."

Sobbing utterance consists of a spasmodic inhalation and an expulsive utterance of the breath. So far as the intake is heard, the sound, like that of the sigh, is of *uh*. If no words accompany the expulsion, the sound is simply the rough breathing of the same vowel. If words occur, they again ride out on the expiring breath. This mode is the utterance of poignant mental distress, though its expression may be a relief to long-pent-up emotion. An example of sobbing utterance occurs in the following lines from the part of Mademoiselle Rose (page 128) in *The Lord's Prayer:*

> Oh, forgive me! I am beside myself. But if he is in Paradise, as you say, how can I live on here? When he was little, I cared for him; when he became a priest, noble and strong, I looked up to him as to a father. I served him — I took care of him — he took no thought for himself. Every evening he would read — here — by this lamp — and I would sew near him. Often we would both speak at the same moment of the

same thing, so close were our thoughts. For his sake I refused to marry. When he was absent, I stitched my thoughts of him into the garments I made for him, and I was happy. I owe him everything, and now! My grief is precious to me, — a cruel joy. My last breath will be to mourn for him — my brother.

If there were any question as to the delivery of the above passage, it is decided by the Curé's lines:

Poor, broken heart. Your tears will water a green spot in the desert of your empty future.

Panting utterance consists of alternating quick, short inhalations and quick, short expirations. It is the result of unusual physical effort and is the expression of physical distress. If there are no words, the aspirate sound is of a series of *uh-huh's*, with a slight accentuation of the *huh*. If speech occurs, the words are uttered, sometimes in short phrases, sometimes singly, according to the degree of breathlessness to be represented, on the expiring breath. This mode of utterance, gradually subsiding, will naturally be used by the actor portraying the fugitive in *The Lord's Prayer* (page 131):

At last, shelter! . . . For the love of God, let me stay. . . . I am a fugitive. They are tracking me to my death. If they take me, they will shoot me against the wall. I saw your garden gate. You will hide me? Give me a corner while I can lie hid for one day, only one. I promise to go to-morrow. Turn me out now and I am lost. You love some man, father, son, husband, brother, I implore you, save my life in the name of the man you love.

Gasping utterance consists of a long expiration dying away into silence, followed by a quick, spasmodic inhalation. This intake, so far as audible, like the inhalations in sighing, sobbing, and panting, has the sound of *uh!* and the expiration when there are no words, the sound of a prolonged *huh*. When words occur, they are uttered with the long-drawn-out exhalation, becoming gradually fainter and fainter. This mode of utterance is the language of the struggle between life and death and may conclude with the rattle in the throat. An example of this mode, though there are no words for him to utter, is found in the part of

the Royalist in *The Cottage on the Moor*, when shot through the throat (page 144).

Laughter is the result of a spasmodic muscular contraction. It is a combination of explosive utterance and stress of tremor, which is defined and illustrated later. It may be given with a variety of voice qualities and rates of time, and with different degrees of force and kinds of inflections. It bears a striking resemblance to sobbing; we have all probably heard sobbing that we mistook for laughter. The chief difference in their vocal expression is that while laughter applies energy to the first part of the utterance, sobbing applies it to the last part. It should be noted that when the laugh occurs in its pure form, that is, without words, its character varies according to the vowel sound employed. Compare, for instance, the difference between laughs on *he*, *ha*, *haw*, and *ho*. Where words occur, laughing utterance manifests itself in a sort of rippling stress of tremor. In cases where the dramatist has omitted to print the conventional *ha! ha!* the actor must decide when he should prefix or add the pure laugh to the words, and which of the vowel sounds will best mirror his character and state of mind. An example of laughing utterance occurs toward the end of *A Sunny Morning* (page 48):

DOÑA LAURA. Will you go to your bench?
DON GONZALO. No, Señora, I will come to this, if you do not object?
DOÑA LAURA. This bench is at your disposal. [*Both laugh.*]
DON GONZALO. And I will surely bring the bread crumbs.
[*Both laugh again.*]

Qualities of Voice. The speaking voice has four centers of resonance. Each of these has a marked characteristic of sound which we term its quality. According to their centers of principal resonance these voice qualities have been named: — *Head tone, Orotund, Guttural, Pectoral.*

Head tone is that quality of voice whose center of resonance is in the head. All highly pitched speech is in head tone, but the quality of the head tone may be brought down so low as to be of a pitch which may be taken by the

upper ranges of the second voice quality; namely, the *orotund*. The lower ranges of head tone are heard in expressions of mental equilibrium, so that the example under *effusive utterance* might also be cited as an example of head tone. According to its combination with other factors and according to the height of its pitch, head tone may be the expression of tenderness, pity, kindly persuasion, or such excited states of mind as result from anger, gladness, or terror. As an example of this quality of voice in low range expressing tenderness, consider the following passage (page 214) from *The Beau of Bath:*

BEAU NASH. Is that a tear which falls for it, my sweet?
THE LADY. [*Very sweetly and gently.*] A tear is naught, sir.
[*She turns to him.*] Ah, must I repeat
My love in *words* before you will believe
That I, too, loved in vain?
[*As their eyes meet, her meaning grows clear to him.*]
Now I must leave,
For 't is not long before the clock strikes one.
BEAU NASH. And you loved me!
THE LADY. Our hour is almost done.
I leave you to your firelight and your chair,
And to your game that 's always — solitaire!

As an example of head tone in higher pitch, expressing enthusiastic delight, note, in *The Cottage on the Moor*, the Boy's reply to his Grandfather's question (page 137), "Why do you think the soldiers were drilling?":

Oh! I know now; the King is coming back. You told me ever so long ago he would come back, and we should be fighting again, and old Cromwell would be beaten. . . . [*Excitedly.*] Will there be a fight? What will you do, grandfather?

Still higher in head tone are the terrified shrieks of Sylvette in "The Romancers" at the moment of the staged abduction (page 108):

Help! Percinet! they 're carrying me off!

Orotund is that quality of voice whose center of principal resonance is in the mouth. It has fullness and power and a distinctly masculine sound. It is the language of dignity, strength, hatred, indignation, and, in its

lower ranges, of reverence. We hear it in *The Shoes that Danced* in the following passage from the part of Watteau (page 241):

> Maker of us all,
> We do beseech Thee for a perfectness.
> Oh, Architect of sighs, doubt, and disgust,
> Builder of broken bodies and of souls
> That bear the blemish of Thy hand, — no, no,
> I will not think upon the bruisèd world,
> That like a serpent shines beneath Thy heel,
> Accursed and beautiful, afflicted, fair,
> Bright and vindictive. Rather will I set
> My hand to make perfection — if I may.

Though the orotund, as we have said, is a distinctly masculine quality, it is not exclusively so; and wherever the emotions which we have named as wont to find expression in the orotund occur in feminine rôles, we shall hear in these characters either an orotund or a head tone so low in pitch as to be indistinguishable from it. The following passage from the same play (page 247) expressing the Queen's indignation and scorn should for the most part be so read:

> Monsieur Watteau, I bid you an adieu.
> I go from your door. But when I go, monsieur,
> Hunger and Desolation and Despair
> Shall enter in. I pray you, see this man,
> Who better loves a foolish Columbine
> Than a Madonna! When the centuries
> Shall loose their tongues on him, their speech shall be
> Monsieur Watteau, great Painter and great Fool.

Before we go further, we must warn the young student of expression not to think that the minute he finds words indicative of a given emotion, he can instantly, as it were by rule of thumb, decide what voice quality to use. In many cases, this is possible, but in many others the situation is complex and all the elements entering into it must be considered. Take, for example, in *The Lord's Prayer*, the following words of the Curé to Mademoiselle Rose (page 129):

I feel the spirit of your brother hovering over us. It is as if he said: "Weep if you must, my sister, your tears are dear to me, but weep with courage. Hold ever in your heart the memory of former days and the hope of those to come. Live nobly. I will watch over you. Read aloud the Holy Book and as you hear the divine words, you will think that you hear the echo of my voice. When you succor those unfortunate ones whom I have loved you will feel the pressure of my hand in their hand clasp. Travel then the length of the way mapped out for you. I, your invisible guide, will help you bear the burden of your sorrow."

Here we find an expression of pity which, according to rule, one should read in head tone; we see also that a characteristic of the Curé is dignity, which is ordinarily expressed in the orotund; but here he conjures up the awesomeness of a dead brother's speaking to his living sister. Now awe, we are about to tell you, is ordinarily voiced in the pectoral quality; to introduce the latter quality here, however, would be to strike a note absolutely out of harmony with the characters and the situation. One's conclusion, therefore, would be that the passage should be read in the orotund, with here and there a touch of the head tone.

Guttural quality of voice results from a vibration of the pharynx. It has an uncouth sound and resembles the growl of beasts. It is, therefore, heard in the voices of the rough and vicious, especially as they express such emotions as hatred, disgust, and scorn; but the uncouth old man, Dan'l, in *Colombine* (page 250), might use the guttural almost habitually:

> . . . all the troubles as worrits a man
> Was locked in a box when the world began.
> And there no doubt they'd ha' bid till now,
> If the dummel soul as had got the key,
> Had n't got mixed up with a maid somehow
> And gone and handed it over to she.
> And what do ee fancy the maiden did?
> Darn me, Nathan'l, ur lifted the lid.
> And all they troubles come trooping out,
> Like hens from a chicken-run might have done.
> For the maiden fancied without a doubt,
> They'd go back in the evening like, one by one.
> . . . . . .
> To think of the trouble ur brought on we —
> I reckon I owes my old gal to she.

Another example of a passage which might be read with the guttural quality occurs at the end of *The Cottage on the Moor*, when the two Roundhead troopers burst into the room (page 144):

TROOPER [*to the dead man*]. Well, you found the right man, anyhow. It's seldom I miss.

SERGEANT. There's precious little here. [*Sees the bottle on the table.*] Hullo! [*He holds the lantern, then throws it down.*] Empty: trust a King's man for that!

TROOPER. Pity I missed the other two.

SERGEANT. No time to follow them now: they'll be over the border, and we're not safe a minute here. [*He puts the lantern down again by the dead man's head.*] What shall we do with this? [*He kicks the body.*]

TROOPER. Let him wait till King Charles comes!

Pectoral is that quality of voice whose seat of principal resonance is in the chest. It includes the very lowest range of voice and results from a depressing emotion, which causes a great relaxation of the physical system. It has, therefore, generally little volume, so little sometimes that it seems veiled with a whisper, or aspirate quality. Both Dan'l and Nathan'l at the entrance of Colombine (page 251) in the play of that name might use this quality:

DAN'L. Lawks-a-mussey, Nathan'l, be I dreaming or be I cracked?

NATHAN'L. My goodness, Dan'l, I do believe as she's a fairy . . .

DAN'L. Here, come into the shadow of these trees,
And give that clacking tongue of yourn a rest.

NATHAN'L. Oh, this be more wonderful than all the things I ever guessed.

DAN'L. And it means *summat* that you *may* depend.

NATHAN'L. See, where she walks, the grass don't even bend beneath her feet. She be a fairy, Dan'l.

Another example is found in *The Rising of the Moon* (page 175), where the Man, simulating awe to intimidate the Sergeant, says:

And there was a policeman in plain clothes, too. . . . It is in Limerick he was. . . . It was after the time of the attack on the police barrack at Kilmallock. . . . Moonlight . . . just like this . . . waterside. . . . Nothing was known for certain.

Degrees of Force. In speech as in music we have no

absolute standard of what constitutes the various degrees of loudness, yet the following terms, like the pianissimos and fortes in music, are serviceable indications of different gradations: *Whispering force, Suppressed force, Moderate force, Declamatory force.*

Whispering force is the expression either of physical weakness, of secretiveness, or of such a degree of awe as robs the voice of tone. An example of this degree of force occurs in *The Beau of Bath,* when the Lady, stepping out from the picture frame, awakes the dozing Beau Nash, saying, "'T is my play, I think, if I see rightly by the candle's gleam." Here he utters the single word "Rosamond!" according to the printed stage directions "in a whisper."

Suppressed force results from an infusion of the whisper into any one of the voice qualities. Thus, whatever mental or physical states these qualities and the other factors of speech entering into the given utterance would express without the whisper, they now express with the additional revelation of either physical weakness, or of secretiveness. How much of the whisper should prevail and how much of the voice are nice questions, to be determined by the speaker. As suppressed force is one of the most common and effective elements in dramatic expression, it should be thoroughly at the command of all who would read dramatic literature aloud. Students who have any difficulty in acquiring it should at first read a passage entirely in a pure whisper, and then, by increasing the energy, inject more and more voice into the utterance until the desired result is attained.

An example of suppressed force, where the whispering element is so slight as to be merely a veil, is furnished at the opening of *The Romancers,* where the lovers read in turn from *Romeo and Juliet.* Here, even if they knew nothing of how to read mimetically the passages from Shakespeare, their fear of being detected in their clandestine meeting would cause them instinctively to use the language of secrecy.

It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.

Suppressed force as the expression of both weakness and of secretiveness, combined with his normal orotund, is heard in the utterance of the wounded Royalist in *The Cottage on the Moor* (page 140):

They must be near now. I must get on. I tell you I must get to the border. Where's my pistol? [*He tries to stand up.*] My shoulder! I remember now. I was riding up the other side of the ridge, and when I got to the top, the moon came out from behind a cloud. Suddenly I heard two shots from the moor on my left. My horse bolted. There was a stinging pain in my shoulder, and I felt faint. I saw this cottage below me, and made for it. . . .

Moderate force is the expression of a mind neither excited nor depressed. It is the language of everyday, commonplace conversation. This degree of force would seem to demand no practice, but it will be found from experience that many pupils have difficulty in using just the amount of energy necessary to make the voice seem vital and to carry, and at the same time to express mental equilibrium. Examples of passages calling for moderate force abound in the modern drama. For a concrete example, read the opening of *Colombine* (page 249):

DAN'L. Well, Nathan'l.
NATHAN'L. Well, Dan'l.
DAN'L. There's little use in stopping here much longer.
NATHAN'L. Not as I can see.
DAN'L. Like my old eyes, the sun don't grow no stronger.
NATHAN'L. And I wants my tea.
DAN'L. Do ee, lad?
NATHAN'L. Ah, main bad.
DAN'L. Which means 't is time to go, I reckons.
NATHAN'L. That's the proposition as I seconds.
DAN'L. Come on then, let's be moving. Tip us yer daddle.

A greater degree of force may result from two conditions. In the one case, it may be caused by a greater intensity of emotion; in the other, by a desire to make one's

self heard or to gain attention. As an example of increase of force expressing a corresponding increase in the emotion prompting to utterance, consider the growing impatience of the Sergeant in *The Rising of the Moon* as the Man persists in trying to gain the stairs leading from the quay to the water's edge (page 173):

I won't have any one lingering about the quay to-night. . . . Move on. . . . Where are you going? . . . Don't be a fool. I did n't tell you to go that way. Be off with you. What are you stopping for? . . . Come back here. . . . [*Rushing after him.*] Come back here, come back.

An earlier line from the same play (page 171) exemplifies the use of a greater degree of force to gain attention.

POLICEMAN B. I think this would be a good place to put up a notice. [*He points to barrel.*]

POLICEMAN X. Better ask him. [*Calls to Sergeant.*] Will this be a good place for a placard? [*No answer.*]

POLICEMAN B. Will we put up a notice here on the barrel?

The greatest degree of force, known as *declamatory force*, is called for by the stage direction (page 143) in *The Cottage on the Moor:*

He unmuffles the lantern, opens the window, leans out with the light upon his face, and *shouts.*

Stress. Stress as a technical term in the study of speech refers to the application of force to utterance. There are five kinds: *Initial, Median, Final, Thorough, Stress of tremor.*

Initial stress is the application of force to the first part of the sound, the word, the phrase, or the sentence. It is the language of impulse, of excitement, and is, therefore, heard in expressions of such emotions as anger, joy, terror, and is often used by very dictatorial or dogmatic speakers. An example of initial stress is heard in *The Rising of the Moon*, where the Sergeant commands (page 173):

Stop! . . . Come back from those steps. . . . Move on, I tell you.

Later we read in his part, the stage direction "furious" (page 181) followed by

Be off, the two of you.

An example of initial stress voicing exultant joy is heard throughout these lines in the part of Watteau in *The Shoes that Danced* (page 232):

> My dreams rush on like tempests
> Full of great sound and fire. Heaven calls me.
> Raphael says come, and Michael Angelo
> Thunders affection from St. Peter's Dome.
> The air is full of flaming robes of Titian,
> And pale sweet faces of Leonardo. Rembrandt
> Disturbs my slumbers! All the mighty visions
> I have dreamed of so long — the wings, the haloes, —
> And high above the altar, pale with glory,
> My great Madonna.

Median stress is the application of force to the middle of the sound, the word, the phrase, or the sentence. The increase and the subsequent diminution are generally both gradual and accompanied by a rise and fall in pitch. Thus, this kind of stress resembles the crescendo and diminuendo usually heard as a melody soars upward or has "a dying fall." It is preëminently the expression of pity, tenderness, and of persuasion. For a concrete example, consider the passage in *The Romancers* (page 98), where Percinet, though he pretends to be addressing his father, is really speaking for the ears of Sylvette on the other side of the garden wall:

> Yes, the wall's beautiful eyes! [*Turns toward the wall.*] Very beautiful eyes they are! . . . Fresh, azure smiles, sweet blue astonishments, clear, deep flower eyes, you touch our hearts! If ever tears empearl your chalices, we'll distil them with a kiss!

Earlier in the same play, where the lovers read from *Romeo and Juliet*, we have two reasons for the use of median stress. In the first place, the passage expresses the tenderness of the lovers of Verona; in the second place, Sylvette and Percinet undoubtedly should be represented as expressing their own affection for each other. One of the passages read by Sylvette is as follows:

> Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I
> It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
> To be to thee this night a torchbearer

Final stress is the application of force to the last part of the utterance. It is the expression of determination and of hatred; and of such kindred emotions as disgust and impatience. An example of a passage in which final stress occurs frequently is the following extract from the part of Bergamin (page 98) in *The Romancers:*

He's a fool! — But I know what makes him lose his head. You come here to read in secret. Plays! In verse! Poetry! No wonder your head is topsy-turvy. No wonder you wander off to dream, and talk of woodbine, and see blue eyes in the wall. A wall has no need to be pretty, but strong. I'll have all those green things taken off; they might hide some breach: and to better guard us from an insolent neighbor, I'll have this side re-mortared — build a fine white wall — very white, very smooth, very trim. In the place of — woodbine, I'll have grooves cut in the plaster, and dress out the wall with bits of broken bottles, sharp as steel, set in serried ranks. No mercy! I'll have it like that!

Thorough stress is the application of energy evenly throughout the utterance. Often it is the expression of conscious control and of calm earnestness. It may, therefore, express sternness, but never anger. A concrete case illustration is the following passage uttered by the Curé (page 130) in *The Lord's Prayer*, after Mademoiselle's torrent of bitterness and grief:

If I thought but of the dignity due the office I hold, I should pass the threshold of that door and never return. I should pronounce denunciation upon a rebellious soul and go away. But the God whom you defy is the same God your brother worshiped. I dare to affirm that at the moment of his death, your brother raised his hand in blessing and in supplication for pardon: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Hate, curse, denounce, if you must, unhappy woman that you are. But remember that if your brother could speak to those who caused his death, it would be in pity for their blindness and in forgiveness for their cruelty. [*Goes toward the door.*] Good-bye.

Stress of tremor is the application of energy unevenly throughout the utterance. It may be the result of one of two causes. In the first place, it may be due to physical weakness attendant on old age or sickness. In the second place, stress of tremor may be due to unrepressed or uncontrolled emotion. It is heard, therefore, in laughter, weeping, and in expressions of extreme fear and anger.

This kind of stress is so commonly called for in dramatic literature that its mastery ought not to be neglected by those who would read plays aloud. It may be practiced by taking any one of the vowels and prolonging it in a continuous stream of ripples more easy to illustrate *viva voce* than to describe in print.

But as an example for practice, consider Doña Laura's reply to Don Gonzalo's remark in *A Sunny Morning*, that the lines he has just read are in a humorous vein (page 41). Her answer is: "So I see." This is prefaced with the direction "Laughing." Here, then, are three vowel sounds, O, I, and E, of which the second is a compound, equal to *ah* plus ɪ. Take a full breath and then prolong each one as a series of tremulous *O*'s, *ah*'s (with a concluding ɪ) and *E*'s. Then read the line as naturally as possible with a little ripple throughout the utterance.

The same method may be used in learning to express the growing fear of the old grandfather in the following passage from *The Cottage on the Moor* (page 142):

[*His fear grows on him in spite of himself.*] Do you think I could have — no — he can't be in danger: he knows every path on the moor. And, besides, I was thinking — I could n't help thinking. . . . [*With deep feeling.*] I'll tell you. It 's more than ten years ago now, and we were living in the cottage then, the boy and I, as we're living now. And one day his father was shot by those devils out there on the road: and ever since then — Oh! do you think I could risk it again? [*He sits down at the table and bows his head in his hands.*]

An example of anger and hatred becoming exultant enough to warrant the use of a touch of stress of tremor is Mademoiselle Rose's outburst in *The Lord's Prayer* (page 130):

Do you hear that? The sound of the guns makes me glad. I am mad for vengeance. If they need any one to incite the soldiers, to shoot down the rebels, let them come to me, I am ready!

Time. Time as factor in speech is composed of two elements: movement and pause. Unlike music, with its definite recurrence of rhythm, neither the rate of movement nor the length of pause in speech can ordinarily be

measured. Thus, while the musician may read that a given composition is to be played at the rate, let us say, of one hundred and twenty quarter notes to the minute, the reader of a play can gather from the text only such suggestions as that the lines in a given passage are to be given slowly, at a moderate rate of speed, or fast. But just how slowly or how fast must be left to his judgment.

In *slow time*, the movement through the unit of utterance is slow and the pauses between the units proportionately long. This rate of time is the expression of depression or of deliberation. An example or a passage which should be delivered at this tempo occurs in *The Beau of Bath* (page 212) where Beau Nash says:

> 'T is vain to wish for things that may not be;
> Yet could you for one hour come back to me
> Would I not say all that I left unsaid
> In days gone by? But you are long since dead,
> While I, grown old, above the embers cower,
> Or play a game to help me pass the hour
> When shadows flicker . . . and the candles blink
> Until I drowse . . . and . . .

Of course, the greater the depression, or the slower the mental action in deliberation, the slower will be the time.

In *moderate time*, the movement through the utterance is neither noticeably fast nor slow, and the pauses, neither noticeably short nor long. This rate of time is the expression of a mind in a state of equipoise, neither elated nor depressed, or else of self-control deliberately directing the rate of speech. Passages which should be read with a moderate time abound throughout this volume, but for a concrete example, one might take Policeman B's last speech (page 181) in *The Rising of the Moon:*

> Well, I thought it [the lantern] might be a comfort to you. I often think when I have it in my hand and can be flashing it about into every dark corner that it's the same as being beside the fire at home, and the bits of bogwood blazing up now and again.

In *fast time*, the movement through the utterance is quick and the pauses proportionately short. It is the expression of excitement.

An example of *fast time* occurs at the close of our extract of Act I of *The Romancers*, when Sylvette, seized by the pseudo-abductors, shrieks for help (page 108):

PERCINET. I come. [*He jumps over the wall, draws his sword, and fights with several masks.*] There! — There! — There! —

STRAFOREL [*to the musicians*]. Tremolo! [*The violins raise a dramatic tremolo. The Swordsmen escape. Straforel in a theatrical tone.*] By Bacchus! the child is a devil!

[*Duel between Straforel and Percinet. Suddenly Straforel carries his hand to his heart.*]

STRAFOREL. The blow . . . is mortal! [*He falls.*]

PERCINET [*running to Sylvette*]. Sylvette!

[*Tableau. She is in the sedan, he on his knees.*]

SYLVETTE. My deliverer!

PASQUINOT [*arriving*]. The son of Bergamin! Your deliverer! . . . Your deliverer? . . . I'll give him your hand!

SYLVETTE and PERCINET. Heaven!

The untrained usually have considerable difficulty in using a slow time. This is due to an ignorance of how to move slowly through the sounds of a word and to a wrong conception of pause. Now in order to move slowly through a word one must note that, as in singing, it is the vowel element which one prolongs, and if the vowel is not a pure vowel, it is the first part of the diphthong which is sustained. For instance, in the word *arraign*, we have two vowel sounds, the first of which might be represented by the short *ŭ* as in *up*, and the diphthongal vowel *ai*, which might be represented by the word *aye* in the expression *for ever and for aye*. This diphthong divided into its elements proves to be short *ĕ* as in *met* plus *ĭ* as in *thin*. Take a full breath and then prolong the first *a* (like *u* in *up*) for four slow beats; then do the same with the first or root sound of *ai* (that is, short *ĕ*), not adding the last or vanishing sound *ĭ* until the fourth beat is completed.

The element *pause* is easily acquired if, instead of thinking of pausing *after* what one has just uttered, one turns the mind in the opposite direction and thinks of pausing *before* what one is about to say. In the interim one gathers up one's mental and physical powers, generating the new thought with the incoming breath. There is

perhaps no single principle which is more effective than this of thinking of pausing *before* what one is about to say rather than *after* what one has said, and to pursue the mental and physical action suggested.

Inflections. Inflections are gliding variations of the pitch of the voice. Since the voice may glide directly upward or downward or may move in what seems more like a curve in either direction, there are three main varieties of inflections: *Direct rising*, *Direct falling*, *Circumflex.*

Of the latter there are three types: a *circumflex rising*, a *circumflex falling*, and a combination of the two, named *compound-circumflex.*

The direct rising and direct falling inflections are the expressions of a character who is saying just what he means as contrasted with one whose words taken literally mean one thing, but the sound of whose voice by the use of the circumflex implies something more or something different from the actual words.

The *direct rising inflection* indicates incompleteness of thought, and thus often enables the speaker to make pauses without giving the impression of having finished his sentence. Thus, we hear it time and again in sentences where the speaker makes a break between the subject and the verb; between long modifying phrases preceding the subject, and the subject nominative; between transposed predicate modifiers which precede the subject nominative, and the subject; and between members of a series in the same grammatical construction. For example, consider the following extract from *The Romancers* (page 102), where we have indicated the pauses by / . In this passage, the rising inflection should in each case prevail except at the end of the sentences:

Marriage without obstacles/is n't tempting to two such poetic young simpletons. Profiting from the fact that they had grown up far from here,/we laid our project of a union,/and reflecting that to hinder them from seeing each other/was the surest means of bringing them together,/ that 't would please them to think they were stealing the sweets,/I invented this admirable hatred. You/doubted the success of such an unheard-of plan. Well, sir,/we've nothing more to do but to say yes!

The direct rising inflection, again expressive of incompleteness of thought, is of course the inflection of direct questions.

The *direct falling inflection* expresses completeness of thought. It is, therefore, heard in direct answers to direct questions and in general at the end of all declarative sentences that are the simple assertion of one speaking without sarcasm, irony, or any subtlety which would insinuate in sound more than the actual words express. Though there are a few rising inflections in the following extract from the same play (page 102), it may be taken as an example of a passage in which direct falling inflections prevail:

They have a rendezvous here to-night. Percinet will arrive first. The moment Sylvette appears, masked men, who have been in hiding, seize her. Then my young buck rushes on the ruffians, and attacks them with his sword. They pretend to flee. You arrive. I appear. Your daughter and her honor are safe. Your joy overflows. You let fall a few tears, bless the heroic rescuer, I relent: — tableau!

A good example of a passage illustrating the use of the direct rising inflection in direct questions and of the direct falling in answers is the following dialogue from *The Cottage on the Moor* (page 135):

BOY. Are you coming, grandfather? I'm getting hungry.
GRANDFATHER. Is supper ready yet?
BOY. Yes, it's been ready for hours and hours.
. . . . . .
GRANDFATHER. What have you been doing all day? Did you go out at all the time I was away?
BOY. I went to the top of the hill.
GRANDFATHER. Tell me, did you see anything on the moor?
BOY. Yes, I did. Away on the skyline once I saw some horsemen riding along.
GRANDFATHER. Which way? Where did you see them?
BOY. Over there.
GRANDFATHER. Which way were they going?
BOY. I don't know. I just saw them for a moment, against the skyline.

It is to be noted that the rising inflection is not necessarily continued throughout an interrogative sentence. For instance, in the question, "What have you been doing

all day?" the voice glides upward from the beginning of the sentence through the word "doing," but falls on "all day." So, in the next sentence, "Did you go out at all the time I was away?" the voice rises upward from the beginning of the sentence through the word "out," but falls in "at all the time I was away." Again in the Grandfather's fourth speech, "Where did you see them?" the rising inflection is on "Where," but there is a falling inflection through "did you see them?"

The *circumflex inflection* is a bend of the voice upward or downward so that the literal words and the grammatical form of the sentence which, taken by themselves, mean one thing, are made by the sound of the voice to imply or insinuate something more or something different. The circumflex is, therefore, the language of irony, sarcasm, insinuation, and of amazement which can hardly accept the truth. The rising circumflex is heard in rhetorical questions; that is, questions which carry their own answer. Here the rising element still expresses incompleteness of thought, but the shape of the curve upward seems to compel the listeners to complete the thought as the speaker wills. An example of such circumflex rising inflections is heard in the lines of the Queen in *The Shoes that Danced* (page 244):

> Why — do you not know
> What 't is to raise the enmity of queens?
> . . . . . Does he not hear?
> Sir, I command you. What, would you be hanged?

Note the amazement voiced in the above passage by the long upward curve on "Does he not hear?" and "What?"

In the lines which immediately follow those quoted above, we have illustrations of the two other kinds of circumflex inflections and a further example of the circumflex rising:

> Why, man — I am the queen!
> So. Then I will be mild. I have behaved
> Like a child that cried for a star. Is it so high?

The word "queen" takes a falling circumflex so that the

sound seems to mean: I am the queen and all that that implies of power. "So" takes a combination of both the upward and downward curves, making a compound circumflex like that of Iago's significant "indeed" after Othello's admission that Cassio had been a go-between at the time of his courtship. The last sentence "Is it so high?" takes the circumflex rising.

II. Stage Deportment and Principles of Acting

Entrances. (*a*) *Timing one's entrance.* Each entrance presents its own particular time-problem. For instance, one must consider whether one is to enter instantly after the last word spoken before the direction "enter" occurs; whether there should be a pause before such an entrance; or whether one must be actually on the stage and in a certain place before such last word dies away. Take, for example, Straforel's first appearance in *The Romancers.* Here, he must enter the instant Bergamin finishes his remark, "He's going to put the play upon the boards." One moment sooner would ruin Bergamin's speech and spoil the effect of his own first appearance; one moment too late would make an awkward pause. Similarly, in *The Falcon,* for Filippo even to open the door while the Count is saying,

> To call a madman mad
> Will hardly help him to his wits again,

would destroy the Count's aphorism; it would, however, be quite possible to have a moment's silence, during which the Count places the bird on his perch or in his cage. But, in the case of the entrances of Filippo and Elisabetta during the breakfast episode in the same play, neither must wait for the "dead cue," that is, the final word; for there must be a certain anxious briskness in their "Here's a fine fowl for my lady," and, "Here are fine fruit for my lady," which necessitates their being actually at the table, and not simply coming through the door at that point where the text reads "enter."

(*b*) *The manner of one's entrance.* The manner of entrance must always be in keeping with character, which

should reveal itself whatever the situation. It matters not whether one be a servant, a noble lord, or a thief, one must, the moment one appears, portray how that particular individual would bear himself under the given circumstances. For instance, in *The Romancers*, though Straforel is but the hired tool of Pasquinot and Bergamin, he comes on majestically like the cloak and sword actor that he really is; the Cavalier in *The Cottage on the Moor*, though he staggers in, faint from loss of blood, must do so with something of the grand air; but the burglar in *Nevertheless*, though he enters like a thief in the night, must, so far as he can be seen, do so with the awkwardness of one who "ain't never burgled before." It is too late to begin to assume the character *after* one has made one's appearance.

An old rule for entrance is that one enters with the "up-stage" foot; that is, the one nearest the back of the stage. For instance, if one enters from the left, the right foot precedes; if from the right, the left. The reason for this rule is that one thus tends to turn the face and body toward the spectators and thereby improves the picture. But if a conscious effort to obey this rule results in awkwardness or delay, it is far better to disregard it.

Grouping. Many problems of grouping are solved by recourse to a simple principle. First, find the character that for a given moment should dominate the scene, or be the special object of interest. Next, consider this center of interest as the apex of a triangle, whose base runs parallel with the footlights or curtain-line, and whose sides meet the base at points not far from the extreme right and left of the proscenium. Then, according to the location of the apex, the number of characters on the stage, and their previous positions, either let all but the one who should be the center of interest be grouped some on one side and the rest on the other side of the triangle; or, if a better picture is secured thereby, let all but the one who should be the center of interest be grouped all on the same side of the triangle. But inasmuch as the center of interest is forever changing, so also the grouping varies, thus necessitating

the formation of fresh triangles. Of course, no mathematical exactness is to be observed. The triangular arrangement, however, is a pretty safe working principle for the inexperienced.

If no character seems to dominate, the positions more nearly approximate a line parallel with the footlights or curtain-line. This is true of many scenes played at tables or by characters seated side by side. Witness, for example, *A Sunny Morning*, where throughout the greater part of the play our interest is equally divided between Doña Laura and Don Gonzalo, who sit together on the same park bench.

Crossings. There is no simpler method to brighten a scene which has become "talky" than to change the location of the character or characters on stage. Take, for instance, Lady Giovanna's first long speech in *The Falcon*. Here is a soliloquy of some twenty-two lines. It begins with the Lady Giovanna telling us that she has come to ask the Count for his falcon. Presently, as she wonders how she can ever ask him for such a gift, comes to her the thought of him for whom she seeks it, her "fading Florio." At this, according to the poet's stage direction, she "rises and moves." Where, he does not tell us. But apparently she crosses to right or left, and returns to the table, when she puts back into her casket the diamonds which she has brought. Even such imperfect directions are often missing from the printed texts of plays, since many such movements as uprisings, downsittings, goings up and down stage, crossings from one side to the other, are left to the judgment of the actors or of the director. The answer to the question as to when to introduce such movements is found in the principle exemplified in the case of the Lady Giovanna's soliloquy; they generally are effective at some change in the emotions expressed. Surprise may bring one to one's feet; impatience may send one across the room; distress may set one to pacing the floor; depression may cause one to drop into a chair; and, unless one becomes aggressively antagonistic, one tends to recoil from

whatever one dislikes, so that one whose pride has been affronted draws one's self up and away from the offender, and one who is terrified shrinks from the object feared.

Team Play. If a character, while others are in the scene, must cross the stage while he is speaking, he almost invariably has the right of way; that is, he crosses nearer the footlights. As the effectiveness of the stage picture must often be determined by the location of those farther back with reference to those down-stage, these up-stage characters must generally be ready to "open-up" or "close-in" as may seem best. But there are times when those toward the back cannot well alter their positions. In such cases it devolves upon the down-stage performer to exercise care. For instance, in *The Beau of Bath*, from the moment the Lady of the Portrait descends, she becomes the cynosure of all eyes, and, when she has returned to her frame, Jepson, who comes to call his master to bed, if he does not cross to the Beau, should certainly avoid taking a position directly between the portrait and the audience.

Tempo and Pitch. The rate at which one speaks or moves expresses one's state of mind. For example, rapidity of voice and bodily movements both express an excited state of mind; and slow speech and slow movements, a depressed or sluggish condition; while a normal rate of speech and movement expresses a mind in equilibrium. Thus it is that when two or more players perform a scene in which they express much the same mental state, they must keep much the same time. Any deviation from the tempo must indicate a different mental condition. The boy and girl, for instance, in their scene with the burglar in *Nevertheless* are greatly excited and may naturally use a rapidity quite in contrast with the slow utterance of the burglar who is dull of wit and feels that he is caught. The lovers in *The Falcon* use the slower time of tenderness, but the servant who enters somewhat excitedly, with his "Master, a word with you," may naturally use a faster time. But in an *ensemble* scene, unless the situation and characters demand it, for any actor to take a slow time when the others have taken a rapid one, will

generally result in a lessening of the tension and expression of excitement. In stage parlance, he "drops the scene."

A similar error is committed when for no dramatic effect one takes a pitch noticeably lower than others in a given situation. For instance, consider the scene in *The Romancers*, when the masquers seize Sylvette, who cries, "Help!" and presently, "Percinet! they're carrying me off," and Percinet, crying, "I come," leaps over the wall and fights with several masks, crying, "There! There! There!" Here, if Percinet speaks in a lower register, he destroys the climax to which the scene has been building.

Pantomime. By pantomime we mean all poses and gestures of the body and all expressions of the face which reveal the thoughts and emotions of the characters in the drama. These are, of course, multifarious, and we shall not attempt to set them forth in a system. But there are certain fundamental principles that every beginner in the art of acting should know.

One is that the revelation of our emotions in real life is instinctive. Hence, the look of surprise, of joy, of anger, or any given feeling unless repressed will manifest itself before the speech gives the emotion expression. When bodily expression and speech seem exactly to coincide, it is probably due to the fact that the time elapsing between the two is too brief to be detected.

Another principle is that one tends to get closer to the object which one likes or which attracts one's interest. The movement may be one of attention, of entreaty, or of tenderness. Examples are so numerous that they may be found on page after page in this book. We see the boy and his grandfather, in *The Cottage on the Moor*, leaning intently toward the wounded Royalist to learn his story; the Roundhead troopers in the same play rushing into the cottage for the Royalist and bending over his dead body to examine the wound; the coaxing Columbine, in *The Shoes that Danced*, inclining toward Watteau as she begs for the shoes; the adoring Nash, in *The Beau of Bath*, drawn across the card-game by his lodestar, the Lady of the Portrait.

A third fundamental principle is that we tend to get

away from what we dislike. The movement may be a recoil of wounded pride; of boredom; of fear; of resentment. Examples of such movements are naturally numerous throughout any play. We see the Queen, in *The Shoes that Danced*, drawing herself up haughtily at Watteau's persistent refusals to let her have the shoes; the boy, in *The Cottage on the Moor*, turning away from the old man's oft-told tale of the boy's father's death; the Sergeant, in *The Rising of the Moon*, inclining from the Man who tells of the poor sergeant from Ballyvaughn and of the plain-clothes policeman in Limerick; the boy, in *The Cottage on the Moor*, recoiling from the Royalist who would kiss him good-bye.

Of course, if hatred or fear is superseded by a desire to overcome or exterminate the object of dislike, we get an aggressive movement in accordance with the principle already stated; for the desire to combat brings one toward the object one hopes to remove or defeat. Thus, while the Boy in *Nevertheless*, who has just "magnificently" expressed his lack of fear, "retreats ingloriously" as the Burglar turns suddenly upon him with "Huh?" the Sergeant, in *The Rising of the Moon* when he is sure that a signal has been exchanged between the Man and a party in a boat below, deliberately puts himself between the Man and the steps, and a moment later seizes from the Man his wig.

It should be noted that surprise, even though it be followed immediately with joy, always has about it some element that causes one first to recoil. Such would be the case in *The Beau of Bath*, when the Lady coming to the table awakens the sleeping Nash; in *The Romancers*, when, to the amazement of both Sylvette and Percinet, Pasquinot says, "The son of Bergamin! Your deliverer! . . . Your deliverer? . . . I'll give him your hand!" and they both exclaim, "Heaven!"; and in *A Sunny Morning*, where Don Gonzalo first mentions the name of his old flame, Laura Lorente, in which case, before Doña Laura repeats the name, the author's direction reads "startled."

As a governing principle in all cases of pantomime, we may state that, wherever the nature of the character or

the circumstances under which we see him do not control, absolutely repress, or disguise the emotion, the greater the strength of the emotion, the greater will be the degree of its manifestation.

With reference to gesture it may be noted, first, that the play of modern life does not call for the grand sweeping gestures of the classical and poetic drama; and, second, that when one is in doubt regarding a gesture, it is best to make none.

So far as facial expression is concerned, pupils so lacking in mimetic ability as to be unable to manifest emotions instinctively will hardly have time except at special schools to learn by mechanical analysis and synthesis how to register them convincingly. For those who do possess mimetic ability a profitable hour may consist in a series of life-studies which they bring from actual observation. Another profitable exercise is to take a chapter from one of the novelists, note down all that is said regarding action, pose, facial expression, and mannerisms, and then try to represent them with or without words. For instance, in *Treasure Island* we have in Chapters I and II the following expressions:

He drank slowly like a connoisseur. — Looking as fierce as a commander. — Look up sudden and fierce. — Reeled off to bed. — Stared my poor father out of the room. — Wringing his hands after such a rebuff. — Flapped his hand upon the table. — Opened a sailor's knife, and, balancing it on the palm of his hand. — He spoke to him over his shoulder. — Then followed a battle of looks between them, but the captain soon knuckled under. — Hanging about, peering round the corner of the door like a cat waiting for a mouse. — With an oath that made me jump. — Slammed the door behind him, without looking to right or left, and marched straight across the room. — The captain spun round on his heel.

Exits. Though the exact moment of an exit is generally more accurately represented on the printed page than the time of entrance, the manner is less likely to be suggested. That is left to the intelligence of the actor. But he should apply the same rule that has been stated regarding entrances: he must exit in character. For instance, the

impetuous, high-spirited lad in *The Cottage on the Moor*, though detained by the farewell of the Cavalier and the grandfather, will, as soon as he is released, speed like an arrow for the door to accomplish his errand. Beau Nash, on the contrary, if he makes an exit at the end of *The Beau of Bath*, may well approach the portrait that so few minutes before had come to life, gaze at it with his lighted candle shining full on the lady's face, go to the door, and turn once again — always depicting the bewildered mind of one still wondering as to whether or not he has been dreaming. Incidentally, these two examples exemplify the principle that direct movements on straight lines suggest singleness of purpose; while delays, turns, and curved lines suggest doubt and hesitation.

The End of the Act, or "The Curtain." There are two points in regard to the close of an act concerning which amateurs need instruction. The first deals with the location and poses of all characters who are not making an exit as the curtain is about to descend. These locations and poses must be held until it is absolutely certain that the base of the curtain has reached the floor. Otherwise the effect is sure to be at least disillusionizing if not ludicrous. For example, the praying Mademoiselle Rose, in *The Lord's Prayer*, and the dead Cavalier, in *The Cottage on the Moor*, must not be seen scrambling to their feet, nor the Lady, in *The Beau of Bath*, descending from her portrait when the curtain is within a foot or two of the stage. To avoid such errors, it is safest for all on the stage to hold positions until the stage manager calls "Strike!" or "Clear!"

The second point regards curtain calls — if any are expected from a gracious audience. These may take various forms. In some cases it is well to raise the curtain on the last picture; that is, with the character or characters in the same position as when the act closed. Such might be done in the case of *The Lord's Prayer*, where the raised curtain might disclose Mademoiselle Rose still at her devotions. In other plays, it is effective to suggest the continuation of the scene just closing, by some change in

the picture presented just as the curtain fell. This might be done in the case of *Solemn Pride*. There the curtain falls with Mrs. Bixbee asking for more bandages. It might, on rising, therefore, appropriately disclose the courageous woman engaged afresh in the work of rolling linen. In still other cases, it may be best frankly to "give o'er the play" and let some or all the performers who have figured in the scene acknowledge the plaudits of the audience. Curtain calls of this nature might consist (1) of all the characters who appeared during the scene, arranged more or less in a semicircle, with the principals in the center and the less important characters on the two ends; (2) if applause warrants a second curtain, of the minor characters alone; and (3) of the principal character or characters alone. In any case these "curtains" should be definitely planned, and certainly, for best results with amateurs, actually rehearsed.

III. Play Production

The Teacher Director. The first thing to do is to secure from the agents controlling the acting rights of a play, *written permission* for the performances, together with an agreement, also in writing, as to the amount of royalties to be paid. In the enthusiasm of selecting, casting, and rehearsing a play, it is all too easy for one quite unintentionally to overlook the dramatist's rights; whereof the consequences may be embarrassing. Accordingly, we once again caution producers to see to it that all necessary correspondence is conducted in advance of definite plans for the stage presentation of any play.

In producing a play, the teacher in charge, though he should not be regardless of the wishes and tastes of his pupils, should, at the outset, keep in his own hands the choice of the play, the casting of parts, the conducting of rehearsals, and the direction of the work generally.

In the casting, he may well at first select according to type. By this we mean that he will assign the various characters to pupils whose physical appearance and voices most nearly approximate the characters to be portrayed.

For instance, in casting *The Cottage on the Moor*, he will presumably try one of the smaller boys with an unchanged voice for the grandson, a somewhat larger boy with deeper voice for the grandfather, one of the taller boys with a manly but cultivated voice for the Royalist; and two stocky boys with heavy voices for the Roundhead troopers.

He will find his attention relieved from details for which others may better be responsible, and he will increase the number of pupils who may have a share in the work, if he will organize a staff of assistants. This group should include a stage manager, an assistant stage manager, a property man, an electrician, and, if a public performance is contemplated, a crew of stage carpenters, called by the unlearned "scene-shifters," one of whom is to act as master-carpenter. This force of assistants may be increased as circumstances permit so as to include a scenic artist, a musical director, a master of the wardrobe, a press representative, and various business officers. Indeed, in connection with school dramatics there is opportunity for enlisting all sorts of talent: musical, mechanical, artistic, financial, literary, terpsichorean. Samuel Wesley said that the world was his parish: the province of dramatic art is quite as wide in its ambit.

The Stage Manager. The stage manager should attend all rehearsals. Here, he should have his own copy of the play. But if that is not possible, he uses the director's copy, which he holds ever ready for the latter's consultation. In the first rehearsals, he should note down all facts which are necessary to secure the correct setting of the scene, and make out a list of all the properties required. It will be well for him to underline with red ink (black is of little service in this connection) all the business of the piece, entrances, crossings, and all other changes in location of characters, all off-stage effects such as door-slams, shouts, bell-ringing, and what-not. And, though the actual lighting of the stage will be committed to the electrician, the stage manager should observe just what is called for in this line, and be able to tell the electrician just what he wants. His duties at a performance are multifarious.

He should be at the theater at least three quarters of an hour before the performance. Then he will see that the master-carpenter and crew set the scene; that the property man has all properties in place; and that the cast, who should report at the latest one half-hour before the time set for the rising of the curtain, are assigned to their proper dressing-rooms. From now on, he, or his assistant acting under his command, will indicate to the performers the passing of the time. If all the dressing-rooms lights are controlled by a central switch, this may be done by flashing them all at once. Or a call-boy may be sent to each dressing-room, where he will announce: "Half-hour, please!" "Fifteen minutes, please!" "Overture, please!" — if there is one — or, if not, "Three minutes, please." Finally comes the last call, "First act, please," or "Act, please!" But these warnings, whether by light-flashes or by word of mouth, should be given at these periods.

As the time draws near for the rise of the curtain, the stage manager will order the electrician to turn on whatever lights are called for on the stage. Then, with a last survey of the stage to see that everything is properly set, he makes sure that all persons not on at the rise are out of the way, for which his warning is, "Clear, please!" Next, he must make certain that those who are to open the scene are ready; the command being either, "Places, please," or, "Stand by, please."

As the curtain is now about to go up, he warns the men who work it to be ready. Then he orders the electrician (1) to turn on the footlights; and (2) to turn off the auditorium lights. Finally he signals for the curtain. For the convenience of the amateur stage manager we tabulate these commands and warnings as follows:

(1) "First act, please!" or "Act, please." — (2) "Clear, please!" — (3) "Places, please!" or, "Stand by, please!" — (4) "Foots on!" — (5) "House out!" — (6) "Curtain."

As the act draws near its close, the stage manager again warns the curtain men. If curtain calls are to be taken, they should be carefully planned, with a list of those who are to appear posted at each entrance to the stage; and the

stage manager should not give orders for the house lights to go on until the last curtain call is over or until the applause either dies away or he wishes it to do so. The lighting of the body of the house will silence the applause almost instantly. And the footlights must not be turned off until the auditorium lights are on, for there must never be a moment when the spectators are left in total darkness.

As soon as the act is over and the last curtain call taken, the stage manager, if any change in scenery is to be made, turns the stage over to the crew, with the command, "Strike!"

The commands at the end of the act therefore may be tabulated thus:

(1) "Curtain!" — (2) "House on!" — (3) "Foots off!" — (4) "Strike!"

When delegated to do so by the director, the stage manager will himself conduct the rehearsal, taking pains always to follow closely along the lines indicated by the director and not to introduce any new "business" on his own account.

Assistant Stage Manager. The assistant stage manager stands in much the same relation to the stage manager as does the latter to the director. In the absence of the director, when the stage manager conducts rehearsals, the assistant will "hold the book" and make such notes as seem necessary. It is he who may be delegated by his chief to furnish the property man with the list of properties, to see that the latter are actually in place, or to do any one of a score of things which the stage manager may entrust to him. Generally it is he who either actually performs off-stage sounds such as slamming of doors, crashings of glass, ringing of bells, or directs the one who manipulates these particular effects. He, too, generally directs the sound of a mob. In most of these cases he takes his cue from the stage manager and performs or signals accordingly. One of the best means of signaling between the stage manager and his assistant for an off-stage effect is for the former to raise his arm high in air some moments before the effect is to take place and at the

exact moment when it should occur to bring it smartly down. The same signal may be given in turn by the assistant to anybody working under him.

The Property Man. The property man wins little glory. But if he is faithful and efficient, he earns the lasting gratitude of the teacher director. He it is who must secure whatever the theater cannot supply in the way of stage furnishings — except the scenery — and all the hand properties. It is a rule that he must never purchase when he can borrow, and, if he is a bit of a craftsman, many a penny may be saved by his saw and hammer.

From the stage manager he receives a list of all articles — except the scenery — to be actually placed on the stage, of those to be carried on by performers during the performance, and of such articles as may be required for off-stage effects, whether bells, thunder-drums, doors in jambs to slam, or bags of broken glass for crashes. In the case of hand properties, he may be able to trust the performers to furnish many of these; but he must not leave anything to chance, and he should check up each article on his list. Outside the various entrances to the scene, he should have tables with the properties arranged in the order in which they are needed.

During the performance, he should be ready to intercept each performer who brings any hand property off; and, if it is not to be used again, he should put it where it will not be lost or appropriated by the thoughtless souvenir collector.

At the end of the play or the end of any scene which is to be "struck" — that is, removed or changed — he must carry off carefully all the furniture or other properties still on the stage, taking pains always not to interfere with the stage carpenters, who really have the right of way.

The Electrician. Unless he works simply at the dictation of the director or the stage manager, the electrician will first study the play itself. After noting whether the scene is an exterior or an interior, he will take knowledge (1) of the season of the year; (2) of the time of day; and (3) any changes in the lighting called for as a scene progresses. For instance, in *A Sunny Morning*, he will find

that the whole scene is played with the bright light of an early autumn morning shining upon the little park; that, while both *The Falcon* and *The Cottage on the Moor* are interior scenes, the moonlight from outside which shines through the opened shutter in the latter, must be quite different in color and intensity from the daylight which streams through the window in *The Falcon;* and that, toward the end of the scene in *The Romancers,* the evening falls and the moon comes forth. Then, of course, he must observe what frankly artificial lights must be provided or simulated. For example, in *The Beau of Bath,* besides the candlelight, which may be left to the property man, there must be an electric lamp to shine through the logs on the hearth.

In this connection, he will also note whether or not in a given scene candles, lanterns, or kerosene lamps are lighted or are extinguished; or if electric lamps are turned on or off; for, to achieve the intended effect, these changes must generally be supplemented by a corresponding change of the border lights, or footlights, or of both — a change which must be made sometimes by the manipulation of one set of lights; sometimes by another, each case offering its own problem. Finally, he should plan for the proper lighting behind all doors which would not presumably open into utter darkness, and along paths and streets which in nature would be flooded with moonlight or sunshine.

After his study of the text of the play, the electrician must investigate the lighting system of the stage where his piece is to be performed. There he must make an inventory of the resources at his command. For example, he must learn whether or not he has footlights; border lights to shine from above; floods and bunches to be used off-stage to illuminate doorways and wood-wings; spot lights to emphasize particular characters or objects; pans to hang down lower than the ordinary borders, generally concealed behind "the teaser" or ornamental drapery which goes across the proscenium; what sockets there may be from which he may use extension coils for such lights

on the stage as those in fireplaces, table lamps, and brackets; what colors he has at his disposal; and whether or not the switch-board is equipped with "dimmers" by which to increase or decrease lights gradually.

Finally, he must test at actual rehearsal all his well-planned effects, and study especially how to counteract light with light to avoid grotesque shadows which any particular light or set of lights may throw to the distraction or amusement of the spectators.

All this is enough to engage the interest of any boy with a taste for electricity; and, if the performance is at some theater where the experienced stage electrician is willing to listen to a boy's suggestions, and ready to help him attain the effects he desires, so much the better for the boy's increase in knowledge and also for the lighting of the production.

Stage Hands or Carpenters. The duties of the "scene-shifters," generally known on the professional stage as the "carpenters," seem simple. Their work consists simply in setting up scenery and "striking" it, or taking it down, when it is no longer required. But there are various tricks of shunting, dropping, and lashing pieces, which the experienced do with an exactness and speed seldom attained by amateurs. To acquire something of their skill, if possible let one of the pupils who has been appointed "master-carpenter" learn at a theater, or at least from a professional carpenter, something of professional methods and instruct the other members of the crew; and whether or not that is feasible, let this amateur master-carpenter have a half-hour of scenic rehearsal some day with at least a few pieces of scenery and thus avoid or shorten tedious delays at the dress rehearsal and performance.

Scenery. For about fifteen dollars for each piece one may secure a set of flats. If these are painted some neutral color, say a bluish gray with yellow stippling and no ornamental baseboard or borders, they may serve for a great variety of scenes. Three of these flats should contain arches for doors. For one of these, have constructed the

usual scenic canvas door in one piece. For another arch, have the door made in three detachable panels about three feet each in height, contrived in such a way that any one of them may be removed or so that they may all be connected and swing as a single door. If the lower panel is removed, the opening does for a fireplace; if the middle one is allowed to swing and the others stay in place, it does for a cottage window; if the upper two are removed, the opening may serve for a window of greater length.

Other changes are easily contrived. For instance, the locations of the doors may be altered; a door may be removed and a drapery substituted; a mere change of the furniture, and of the ornaments generally, may transform a drawing-room into a cottage; a knocker placed on one of the doors will be sufficient to suggest an exterior; plain flats backing some evergreens and a wicker seat, a garden.

If, however, no regular scenery is available, it is extraordinary how much may be done with screens of the style used in domestic furnishings and with draperies. After all, the play's the thing, and an audience of to-day soon becomes content with the simple settings or lack of settings of Elizabethan times.

The Curtain. When amateurs have no professional theater at their disposal, they often resort to a platform with an improvised sliding curtain. This is generally a continual source of annoyance. It often refuses to budge and it is almost impossible to close it in such a way as to secure an effective end of a scene. Instead, rig a pair of hangings which will remain together at the top; but which, by means of a cord passed through rings running diagonally across each curtain from the point where they meet, and about four feet from their base to their opposite upper corner, may be pulled upwards into graceful folds at each side. If, in addition, a pair of weights are attached to the curtains at the points where the cords are connected to their inner edge, the curtains will fall instantly into place when the cords which have drawn them up are released

WORKING LISTS

I. COLLECTIONS OF ONE-ACT PLAYS

For Classroom Reading

The Atlantic Book of Modern Plays: edited by S. A. Leonard. Fifteen plays, with Introduction, comment, and annotated bibliography. (Atlantic Monthly Press.)

One-Act Plays by Modern Authors: edited by H. L. Cohen. Sixteen plays, with Introductions and illustrations. (Harcourt Brace.)

Plays for Classroom Interpretation: edited by E. Van B. Knickerbocker. Seven plays, with Introduction, Notes to the Instructor, and illustrations. (Holt.)

Short Plays by Representative Authors (mostly one-act plays): edited by A. B. Smith. Twelve plays. No teaching equipment. (Macmillan.)

Contemporary One-Act Plays: edited by B. R. Lewis. Eighteen plays, with Outline Study of the One-Act Play and Bibliographies. (Scribner.)

For Teachers' Reference [1]

Representative One-Act Plays by British and Irish Authors: edited by B. H. Clark. Twenty plays. (Little Brown.)

Representative One-Act Plays by American Authors: edited by M. G. Mayorga. Twenty-four plays. (Little Brown.)

Representative One-Act Plays by Continental Authors: edited by M. J. Moses. Twenty plays. (Little Brown.)

A Treasury of Plays for Women: edited by Frank Shay. Eighteen plays. (Little Brown.)

A Treasury of Plays for Children: edited by M. J. Moses. Fourteen plays (several of one act). (Little Brown.)

Fifty Contemporary One-Act Plays: edited by Frank Shay and Pierre Loving. (Stewart Kidd.)

Contemporary One-Act Plays of 1921: American: edited by Frank Shay. Twenty plays. (Stewart Kidd.)

Little Theatre Classics, Vols. I–IV: edited by S. A. Eliot, Jr. (Little Brown.)

Other Recent Collections

Plays of the Harvard Dramatic Club. Vol. I. Four plays. *Vol. II.* Four plays. (Brentano's.)

Plays of the 47 Workshop. Vol. I. Four plays. *Vol. II.* Four plays. (Brentano's.)

Carolina Folk Plays. Five plays. (Holt.)

[1] These books all contain lists of plays and other equipment.

Washington Square Plays. Four plays. (Doubleday Page.)
Wisconsin Plays. Four plays. (Huebsch.)
Provincetown Plays. Ten plays. (Stewart Kidd.)
Quick Curtains, and *More Quick Curtains.* Each volume contains six plays. (Stage Guild.)

II. FINDING LISTS OF ONE-ACT PLAYS [1]

CLAPP, J. M. *Plays for Amateurs.* (Drama League.)
DRAMA LEAGUE. *List of Plays for High School and College Production.*
DRUMMOND, A. M. *Plays for the Country Theatre.* (Cornell Extension Bulletin 53, June 1922.)
HASELTINE, A. I. *Plays for Children: An Annotated Index.* (St. Louis Public Library Monthly Bulletin. N.S. vol. 16, no. 8, 1918.) *Second Revised Edition.* With an Introductory Note by C. M. Patten. (A. L. A. 1921.)
KAPLAN, SAMUEL. *Actable One-Act Plays.* (Chicago Public Library, 1916.)
KOCH, F. H. *Community Drama Service.* (Extension Series 36, University of North Carolina Record, 1920.)
LEWIS, B. R. *The One-Act Play in Colleges and High Schools.* (Bulletin of Extension Division of University of Utah. Series no. 2, vol. 10, no. 16, 1920.)
LEWIS, B. R. *Bulletin on the One-Act Play.* (Drama League.)
OGLEBAY, K. *Plays for Children.* Compiled in 1920. (Drama League.)
STRATTON, CLARENCE. *Two Hundred Plays Suitable for Amateurs.* One hundred of these are one-act plays. (Drama Shop, New York.)
WEBBER, J. P. *and* WEBSTER, H. H.: *One-Act Plays for Secondary Schools.* A carefully selected and annotated list. (Journal of Education, March 1, 1923.)

III. THE COMPOSITION OF ONE-ACT PLAYS

ANDREWS, CHARLTON. *The Technique of Play Writing.* (Home Correspondence School.)
ARCHER, WILLIAM. *Play-Making.* (Small Maynard.)
BAKER, G. P. *Dramatic Technique.* (Houghton Mifflin.)
PRICE, W. T. *The Technique of the Drama.* (Brentano's.)
WILDE, P. *The Craftsmanship of the One-Act Play.* (Little Brown.)

SOURCES FOR PLOTS

The following short stories, ballads, and poems are suggested, not because they necessarily contain episodes which can with facility be recast

[1] Other lists of good plays are to be found in *The Drama,* Feb., 1921; April, 1921; Nov., 1922; *Drama League Monthly,* Feb., 1918; *Education,* 1918, vol. 4, p. 372; *English Journal,* Feb., 1918; Mar., 1918; Sept., 1919; *Ladies' Home Journal,* Jan., 1921; *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education,* Oct., 1915, July, 1916, Oct., 1918.

into dramatic form — although most of them can be so adapted — but because their character drawing, human interest, setting, local color, or dialogue are sure to stimulate the creative imagination of students setting out to write one-act plays.

This list of titles is by no means exhaustive; it comprises those which are usually found in collections published for school use, or which are readily accessible in libraries. Other material of the same sorts will suggest itself to both teachers and students.

Upon the writing of one-act plays in school, Mr. H. Caldwell Cook suggests his own method as follows:

"In the beginning the story is told twice, first by the boy who found it or knows it best, and then by the boy who can throw the tale into the shape most suitable for our purpose. It is then acted extempore in prose dialogue, with one of the boys as 'producer.' The scenes, divisions, sets, movement of the plot, and development of the action are then discussed down to the very exits and soliloquies, and an outline drawn up on the board. . . . Voice and gesture in speaking, and posture of body throughout is next dealt with, one after another coming out from his place to suggest the bend of the back, a peculiar stealthiness of entry, or a wonderful new vocal effect, expressive of wrath, triumph, or yearning. Very often after an especially pleasing demonstration they go back on their work and alter the lines the better to suit the action."

Short Stories

Aldrich: My Cousin the Colonel; Père Antoine's Date-Palm; Quite So.

Barrie: Auld Licht Idylls; A Cloak with Beads; The Courtin' of T'nowhead's Bell; How Gavin Birse Put It to Mag Lownie; Lizzie's Wedding; Two of Them.

Harte: Colonel Starbottle for the Plaintiff; How Santa Claus Came to Sandy Bar; The Iliad of Sandy Bar; Left Out on Lone Star Mountain; Outcasts of Poker Flat; Tennessee's Partner.

Hawthorne: The Ambitious Guest; The Birthmark; Dr. Heidegger's Experiment; Drowne's Wooden Image; Feathertop; The Gray Champion; Howe's Masquerade; The Maypole of Merry Mount; The Minister's Black Veil; Old Esther Dudley; The Pine-Tree Shillings; The Snow-Image; The White Old Maid.

O. Henry: The Furnished Room; The Gift of the Magi; Hearts and Crosses; The Hiding of Black Bill; Madame Bo-Peep of the Ranches; On Behalf of the Management; A Poor Rule; A Retrieved Reformation; The Third Ingredient; An Unfinished Story; The Voice of the City.

Irving: Dolph Heyliger; The Legend of Sleepy Hollow; Philip of Pokanoket; Rip Van Winkle; The Spectre Bridegroom.

Kipling: At the End of the Passage; Baa-baa, Black Sheep; The Bridge Builders; The Brushwood Boy; A Centurion of the Thirtieth (in *Puck of Pook's Hill*); The Courting of Dinah Shadd; False Dawn; An Error in the Fourth Dimension; The Flag of Their Country (in *Stalky and*

Co.); His Majesty the King; The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney; In the House of Suddhoo; The Joyous Venture (in *Puck of Pook's Hill*); Lispeth; The Man Who Was; The Man Who Would Be King; On the City Wall; They; The Tomb of His Ancestors; Wee Willie Winkie; William the Conqueror.

PAGE: In Ole Virginia; Marse Chan; Meh Lady; The Old Gentleman of the Black Stock; Ole Jabe's Martial Experiments.

POE: The Black Cat; The Cask of Amontillado; Elenora; The Fall of the House of Usher; The Masque of the Red Death; The Pit and the Pendulum; The Purloined Letter; William Watson.

STEVENSON: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; A Lodging for the Night; Markheim; The Merry Men; Providence and the Guitar; The Sire de Maletroit's Door; Thrawn Janet; Will o' the Mill.

(*Helpful Books:* Ashmun's *Modern Short Stories;* Ramsay's *Short Stories of America.*)

BALLADS

The Battle of Otterburn; Bewick and Grahame; Chevy Chace; The Cruel Brother; The Gay Goshawk; Hind Horn; Johnny Armstrong; Katherine and Jaffray; Kemp Owyne; King Estmere; Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight; Lord Randal; Lord Thomas and Lady Margaret; The Maid Freed from the Gallows; The Nut Brown Maid; Our Guidman; Riddles Wisely Expounded; Robin Hood Ballads; Sir Cauline; Sir Patrick Spens; Thomas Rhymer; The Wife of Usher's Well; Young Beichan; Young Waters.

(*Helpful Books:* Olcott's *Story-Telling Ballads;* Tappan's *Old Ballads in Prose.*)

OTHER POEMS

BROWNING: Hervé Riel; How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix; Instans Tyrannus; An Incident of the French Camp; My Last Duchess; The Patriot; Pheidippides; Up at a Villa — Down in the City.

BRYANT: Sella; The Little People of the Snow.

BURNS: The Cotter's Saturday Night; Duncan Gray; The Highland Widow's Lament; Tam o' Shanter.

BYRON: The Destruction of Sennacherib's Army; The Night Before Waterloo; The Prisoner of Chillon.

CAMPBELL: The Battle of the Baltic; Hohenlinden; Lord Ullin's Daughter.

COLERIDGE: Christabel; The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

GOLDSMITH: The Deserted Village.

HOLMES: Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill Battle.

KEATS: The Eve of St. Agnes; La Belle Dame sans Merci; Old Meg.

KIPLING: Ballad of the Clampherdown; Danny Deever; The Gift of the Sea; Gunga Din; The Overland Mail.

LONGFELLOW: The Bell of Atri; The Courtship of Miles Standish;

Evangeline; King Robert of Sicily; Paul Revere's Ride; The Skeleton in Armor; The Song of Hiawatha; The Wreck of the Hesperus.

LOWELL: The Courtin'; The Finding of the Lyre; The Shepherd of King Admetus; The Singing Leaves.

MACAULAY: The Battle of Naseby; Horatius at the Bridge; Ivry.

SCOTT: Lochinvar; The Outlaw; Rosabelle.

SOUTHEY: The Battle of Blenheim; The Inchcape Rock; The Legend of Bishop Hatto.

TENNYSON: The Charge of the Light Brigade; The Defense of Lucknow; Dora; Enoch Arden; Idylls of the King; Lady Clare; The Princess; The Revenge.

WHITTIER: The Angels of Buena Vista; Maud Muller; The Pipes of Lucknow; Skipper Ireson's Ride; Snow-Bound; The Three Bells of Glasgow.

(*Helpful Books:* Olcott's *Story-Telling Poems;* Stevenson's *Home Book of Verse for Young People.*)

IV. ACTING AND PRODUCING

CLARK, B. H. *How to Produce Amateur Plays.* (Little Brown.)

CRAIG, E. G. *On the Art of the Theatre.* (Browne.)

BEN GREET Edition of *The Tempest, Julius Cæsar,* and *The Merchant of Venice.* (Doubleday Page.)

HERTS, A. M. *The Children's Educational Theatre.* (Harper.)

MACGOWAN, KENNETH. *The Theatre of To-Morrow.* (Boni.)

MACGOWAN, K., *and* JONES, R. E. *Continental Stagecraft.* (Harcourt.)

MORTON, CAVENDISH. *The Art of Theatrical Make-Up.* (Black.)

PLATT, AGNES. *Practical Hints on Training for the Stage.* (Dutton.)

POTTER, I. R. *Hints on Gesture.* (Potter.)

STRATTON, CLARENCE. *Producing in Little Theatres.* The Appendix contains a list of one-act plays. (Holt.)

TAYOR, EMERSON. *Practical Stage Directing for Amateurs.* (Dutton.)

TIBBETTS, G. C. *Better High-School Plays.* (The English Journal. University of Chicago Press. Feb., 1918, vol. 7, no. 2.)

STAGE SETTINGS, COSTUMES, AND PROPERTIES

We include here not only well-known authorities, but also widely used school textbooks whose wealth of illustration will be found a ready help in visualizing scenes — and so in staging plays.

BREASTED. *Ancient Times.* (Ginn.)

DAVIS. *A History of Mediæval and Modern Europe.* (Houghton.)

EARLE. *Costume of Colonial Times.* (Scribner.)

EARLE. *Home Life in Colonial Days.* (Macmillan.)

EARLE. *Stage-Coach and Tavern Days.* (Macmillan.)

EARLE. *Two Centuries of Costume in America.* (Macmillan.)

ELSON. *Modern Times and the Living Past.* (American.)
HATCHER. *A Book for Shakespeare Plays and Pageants.* (Dutton.)
MACKAY. *Costumes and Scenery for Amateurs.* (Holt.)
MORSE. *Furniture of the Olden Time.* (Macmillan.)
QUENNELL. *A History of Everyday Things in England.* (Scribner.)
ROBINSON. *Mediæval and Modern Times.* (Ginn.)
ROBINSON, BREASTED, *and* SMITH. *General History of Europe.* (Ginn.)

V. PERIODICALS DEVOTED TO THE DRAMA

Drama, The. A monthly magazine devoted to the amateur and educational theater. Publishes lists of plays, reviews of latest books, accounts of what schools are doing, plans of staging, sketches of costume, etc. (Drama League of America, Chicago.)

English Journal, The. Publishes short plays for school use, lists, articles on staging, etc. Excellent for teachers. (University of Chicago Press.)

Little Theatre Review, The. A fortnightly survey of news, opinion, and accomplishment in the amateur theater world. Offers many suggestions for the successful performance of plays by schools. (New York Drama League.)

Playground, The. Publishes articles on rural and community dramatics, pageantry, and plays; also lists of plays. (Playground and Recreation Association of America.)

Poet Lore. Publishes plays of high literary merit, many of which are suitable for secondary schools. (Badger.)

Poetry. Publishes plays which are frequently suited for amateurs. (Monroe.)

Quarterly Journal of Speech Education, The. Publishes frequent articles of value to teachers of dramatic literature. (National Association of Teachers of Speech.)

Theatre, The. Has an illustrated section for amateur theatricals. Also publishes articles upon the work of schools and community dramatic organizations in every section of the country. (Theatre Magazine Co.)

Theatre Arts Magazine, The. An illustrated quarterly magazine, devoted to the "art theatre." Publishes lists of plays, articles on acting, staging, etc. (Theatre Arts.)

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